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LESS THAN EIGHT YEARS AGO some Germans arrived in Paris officially to represent their country at the signing of the Treaty of Versailles. They were confined behind barbed wire like beasts in a menagerie. No one welcomed them; no one offered to associate with them; sullen crowds watched them exercise behind their bars. Now, in March, 1927, we have the extraordinary spectacle of another German presiding over the meeting of the Council of the League of Nations—presiding over the successors of those Allied statesmen who thought barbed wire and non-intercourse the wise and manly way to treat a beaten enemy. We confess to having been unable to read of Dr. Stresemann's presiding at Geneva without a thrill of satisfaction that the wheel of time has turned so rapidly, that the new spirit of Europe has found cooperation a better and more Christian way than abuse, hatred, misrepresentation, and ostracism. So far as the League of Nations is responsible for this change or has been the medium for it, we salute it. But the action of the Council itself as to the Sarre and the relations of the German minority schools in Upper Silesia was another triumph of compromise. Dr. Stresemann presided—but the question now is whether the settlement of the Sarre by which a new frontier force of 800 men is to be created to take the place of the French garrison may not cost him his prestige at home. Even Briand made jingo speeches about the enforcement of the much-breached Versailles Treaty for home consumption, and no one brought up the question of getting the remaining Allied troops out of Germany—a member of the Council with the troops of other members quartered on her soil! This remains a crime.

UNOFFICIAL AMERICANS in China have an instinctive sympathy with the Nationalist uprising of which the officials and newspapermen seem incapable. Hundreds of missionaries have refused to heed the panicky "orders" of their consuls to abandon their posts. Canton Christian College, for instance, has just transformed its constitution and become, essentially, an American-subsidized Chinese university. It will have a Chinese president and a Chinese majority on the board of directors; long before the storm surprised slower-moving bodies it made religious instruction elective. The physical property remains American, rented to the Chinese board at one dollar a year. Mission schools which thus follow the national pulse of China remain open, splendidly useful examples of the best that America can give, when stiffer-backed, more consciously foreign institutions close or even suffer mob violence.

THE WISH IS OBVIOUSLY father to the thought in much of the cabled reports of splits within the Chinese Nationalist Party. It has, of course, factions, as has any party, but there is no such opposition between Bolshevik extremists, led by Eugene Chen and Borodin, and moderates, led by General Chiang Kai-shek, as the correspondents would have us believe. The opposition is rather between military and civilians. But Chiang himself is deeply imbued with Sun Yat-sen's democratic principles, and has always been ready to establish civil rule in the wake of his victories. And Borodin, Communist though he is, understands so thoroughly the importance, from both the Chinese and the Russian points of view, of maintaining the integrity of the Kuomintang and of the Nationalist organization that he would certainly use his influence in behalf of the conservative elements if he thought that necessary to avoid a split. Meanwhile Borodin's wife, returning to Hankow after putting their son in a Shanghai school—presumably an American school; Karakhan sent his children to an American school in Peking, for they are the best in China—has been taken from a Russian ship by the Northern generals and is held prisoner in Tsinanfu. This appears to be the most serious damage yet done to a foreigner by China's civil war—but it has not yet led Soviet Russia into landing a "defense force" of 15,000 men on Chinese territory.

FOR BLAND, SMILING, arrogant let-not-thy-left-hand-know-what-thy-right-hand-doeth business we know of no superiors to the experts in the United States State Department. Mr. Morgan, chief of its Latin-American Division, recently appeared before the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Senate. He evaded questions as if he were an oil magnate under cross-examination. He behaved as if the people of the United States had no business inquiring how he and others of their hired men did their work. And when facts do leak out the State Department fact-wrecking crew hastily gets into action. Lawrence Dennis, ex-chargé d'affaires of the United States at Managua, is returning aggrieved, it is said,

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because Mr. Kellogg first instructed him to have Diaz elected President of Nicaragua, and then, after Mr. Dennis had arranged that little matter, declared that the United States was not intervening in Nicaragua and was a non-partisan neutral. The esteemed Washington correspondent of the esteemed New York *Herald Tribune* thereupon visited the State Department, and filed a dispatch stating first, that the instructions which reached Mr. Dennis must have been forged in Mexico, and second, that "the suggestion that the State Department had unduly interfered in the internal affairs of Nicaragua has caused a sensation in diplomatic quarters." Perhaps it did—when we began large-scale meddling, about 1909. Mr. Dennis, the *Times* correspondent noted, with, we hope, conscious wit, is of "a forceful type unusual in the diplomatic service." And then, on the heels of this flurry, came the exclusion of Senator King from our own little private republic of Haiti.

HAITI, SOME OF OUR READERS will recall, was occupied by American Marines in 1916, and the marines are still there. Haiti's customs-houses are under American control, her Constitution and budget are American-made, and her President, M. Louis Borno, is a pure American invention. Haiti has not elected so much as a dog-catcher since Smedley Butler, pistol in hand, dissolved her Senate because it refused to sign on the dotted line. Admiral Caperton from his battleship arranged for the election of Sudre Dartiguenave despite the hostility of the Senate which Butler later dissolved; and Dartiguenave's hand-picked Cabinet arranged for Borno to succeed him, without consultation of the Haitian people. When, therefore, "President" Borno announces that Senator King will not be permitted to land in Haiti because of his expressed hostility to the present regime, any informed person, in the language of the street, smells a rat. Mr. Borno does not so much as change his peculiar style of hair-cut without consulting the American High Commissioner, General Russell. He certainly does not bar an American Senator without at least finding out what General Russell would think of such a course. And when the State Department—which instructed Admiral Caperton to have Dartiguenave elected and edited the present Haitian Constitution, which supervises Haiti's finances and instructs General Russell what to do—announces that it could not think of invading Haiti's "national sovereignty" by insisting upon the admission of Senator King—well, again in the language of the street, it is to laugh.

JAPAN IS A VOLCANIC COUNTRY, and some of her philosophers are fond of explaining her history as that of a volcanic people, accustomed to earthquakes and always on the verge of disaster. Tokio averages two perceptible shocks a week, apart from the minor disturbances detected only by a seismograph. The scientific apparatus, indeed, has for several decades recorded an average of more than 3½ shocks every day in the year. The annals of Japan are full of volcanic calamity; the earliest records tell of a great subsidence in the year 684 when the land sank and the sea swallowed up a million acres. There is some reason to believe that Japan is in a period of heightened volcanic activity; certainly there is no record to equal the gigantic disaster of 1923. Perhaps part of the cause of that toll lay in the ghastly congestion of the modern Japanese city, where families are crowded into what seem like doll's houses and at night occupy every square inch of the floor space. At least civilization brings speedy relief. Japan alone could cope with the needs of the 50,000 people made homeless in the recent earthquake; in 1923 America helped substantially; in 684, it is safe to say, no inhabitant either of America or of Europe even knew of Japan's misfortune.

VIOLENCE WALKS AT NIGHT in Georgia. During the last year in Toombs County scores of persons are said to have been taken out by a band of masked men and flogged. At least twenty of these mob outrages are alleged to be common knowledge. County officials are with the mob, members of the marauding bands sit solemnly on juries and fail to return indictments against themselves. Negroes are flogged, of course; an attorney who has dared to attempt prosecution of the lawless ones was severely beaten and threats of a similar fate were offered to a judge and to the Solicitor General. The offenses for which these night-riding gentlemen deem due process of law insufficient include failure to pay a fine for bootlegging, defense of bootlegging, drinking, wife-desertion, and general conduct offensive to a member of a masked band. Intimidated citizens, with threats of floggings and barn-burnings hanging over them, are afraid to press charges, to name names, to speak out. This is the behavior of the frontier; we are still a frontier country, in Georgia and in many other places.

"MISS NEW JERSEY, make the acquaintance of Mr. Jim Crow. Mr. Crow has just come up from the South, where he is well-known as a first-rate go-getter of trouble. Mr. Crow delivers the goods, any day, any way; a hanging, a burning at the stake, a tar-and-feathering if you have a weak heart and don't want too much excitement at once. Mr. Crow will do for you what he has already so abundantly shown himself able to do for Georgia, North Carolina, Texas, Mississippi, Louisiana, and other sections of our great commonwealth. You are on the right track with Mr. Crow; keep Negro children out of the white, Nordic, all-American high school; make them go to school in a church, unheated except by a stove, and with one teacher for all the grades. What matter that white children have a fine, big, steam-heated high-school building? What matter that Negro taxpayers want to send their children to the same building—not just the same sort of building? Mr. Crow, Mr. James Crow of Washington and points South, is just the man to settle everything right. Delegates of Negro parents will protest to you, Miss New Jersey, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People will send telegrams asking that Governor Moore remove Edgar M. Fink from his post of Supervising Principal of Education because he introduced a policy of segregation for Negro high-school children in Toms River. But don't you care; you just stick to Mr. Jim Crow. He's the man to keep things humming in New Jersey."

ALTHOUGH SCHOOL SEGREGATION, such as has just been introduced in southern New Jersey, has not yet been tested in the higher courts, the Supreme Court of the United States in a unanimous decision has just reaffirmed the unconstitutionality of another type of "Jim Crow" law. We have already commented upon its outlawing of the Texas statute which barred Negroes from voting in the Democratic primaries; now a New Orleans ordinance and two laws of Louisiana imposing restrictions on the owning or leasing of property by Negroes have been put

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under the same ban as the old Louisville attempts at segregation. Slowly but surely the arm of the law is reaching around the Negro to assure him his ordinary civil rights. In time discriminatory school segregation may also fall under the ban. The Constitution of the United States calls the Negro a citizen; the Supreme Court is busy making him one in fact as well as name.

THE GODS DO NOT ALWAYS MAKE MAD those whom they wish to destroy. Sometimes they just make them dumb and stupid. That is what has happened to the Republicans of the State of New York, year after year—and still they learn nothing. Beaten again and again by Governor Smith because they opposed him when he was fighting battles for the people of the State, they once more court destruction at the polls by breaking with the Governor on the question of water-power. He has merely asked of the legislature that it vest the State's natural water resources in a Power Authority, with three commissioners to be appointed by the Governor with the consent of the Senate; nothing is to be done by this Authority until a comprehensive plan of development has been presented to the next legislature for its approval and accepted by it. Instead the Republicans have insisted on another investigating commission. The Governor has flatly told the legislature that such a commission would be "a joke" on the people of the State. Here are his words:

> We have had investigating commissions and debates on water-power since I have been in public life, and most of them have been useless because they usually degenerated into dogmatic statements as to one person's economic views or theories and into generalities and slogans about socialism, predatory interests, etc. I want, if possible, to see this problem solved by lifting it out of political discussion, and I am sure that it cannot be solved by any mere investigating commission.

He declares that he has gone as far in the direction of compromise as he possibly can, and suggests a referendum at the next election so that the people themselves may decide whether they shall have a Power Authority or give way to the private corporations which the Republicans favor.

PULLMAN PORTERS receive from the Pullman Company about $44 a month (plus $34 required for lodging, meals away from home, etc.) and from the public in tips an average of $58.15 per month. It isn't much, even so, for the porter; but the tips save the Pullman Company $7,000,000 a year. Accordingly, the company has just increased its dividend rate from 8 to 10 per cent. As Henry T. Hunt says, "The railroad presidents are a dull lot. They should long ago have introduced the tipping system to pay ticket agents, conductors, and brakemen." What a saving —to the companies—it would be!

THE SITUATION of the textile workers lately on strike in Passaic, New Jersey, is not a happy one, although the companies finally came to terms which seemed a substantial victory for the union. Trade depression is the rule in the Passaic mills as it is generally in the textile industries in the North. It was this that made it possible for the employers to hold out as long as they did; it was no hardship for them to be without workers when they were also without orders for goods. And now, for the same reason, although the mills have signed agreements with the union, the workers are not getting back their jobs. According to recent reports the large Botany mills, normally employing 4,500 persons, have taken back only 400, and it is said that no persons over forty years of age have been reemployed. In all there are some 10,000 former mill hands still unemployed and in want for bare necessities. The General Relief Committee, 743 Main Avenue, Passaic, is appealing to those who so generously supported the strike to help it in relieving somewhat the widespread misery due to unemployment.

BOSTON IS NOW 99 44/100 per cent pure. To be sure, a rash prospective reader can still purchase the Bible, the complete works of William Shakespeare, the "Canterbury Tales" by a man named Chaucer, and a book called "Tom Jones," by Thomas Fields, or Henry Fieldson, or some such name. But aside from these books which the policemen have not yet had time to read, the literature of America's erstwhile Literary Center is fit for any babbling babe. Nine books have been declared unfit for circulation in Boston. The District Attorney has not been able to read all of the nine, but he found an obliging assistant, Mr. William J. Sullivan, who pronounced them impure. "I have entire confidence in Mr. Sullivan's decision," said District Attorney Foley. If the public does not share this confidence, it cannot buy the offending books in Boston, because the booksellers, on the advice of the police, have removed them from their shelves. It remains to be seen whether any publisher whose book is on Boston's index will bring the case to trial as Mr. H. L. Mencken did when his *Mercury* was suppressed at the instigation of the late Canon Chase. With the exception of Horace Liveright, Thomas Seltzer, and one or two others, members of publishing firms have meekly submitted to the Watch-and-Warders and their kin. It is expensive to be a martyr, it interferes with business, it results in advertising of uncertain value. The publishers, like so many other persons, do not believe in censorship, but ——

WE HEARTILY WELCOME a new publication sent us from the University of Oklahoma. It is a little quarterly called *Books Abroad,* and the design of its staff, headed by Roy Temple House, is to "distribute really useful information concerning the more important book publications of Germany, France, Italy, Spain, Belgium, Switzerland, the South American republics, and perhaps other countries." The most useful pages among the thirty-two in this first issue are the twenty containing very brief reviews of current books in French, German, Spanish, and Italian; many books are mentioned, and the notices are for the most part pungent as well as informing. But there is also an essay by H. C. Thurnau, advisory editor from the University of Kansas, establishing an analogy between Europe's literary complexity and the confusion in the American intellectual scene recently described by Eliseo Vivas in a *Nation* article. It behooves all modern-language teachers in America, says Mr. Thurnau, to keep in touch with what is going on in the mind of Europe today. Hence *Books Abroad*—which will be valuable, however, for editors and general readers as well as for teachers. There was no such magazine before. We greet it not only for that reason but because it comes out of Oklahoma, whose university, at least in this department, is definitely a center of usefulness and light. The price, we might add, is nothing.

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The Military Menaces the World

MR. H. G. WELLS did an excellent service by his smashing discussion of the military situation of the world in the New York *Times* of March 6. The question Are Armies Needed Any Longer? he answers emphatically in the negative. The war of the future, he declares, "is from first to last a job for technicians and artisans. There is no more use for drilled troops in it than there is for the Greek phalanx." The professional military classes, he points out, will everywhere try by treaty to put off the use of the latest chemical methods in order to save themselves from extinction. But the fact to him is clear that "the evolution of war is abolishing the soldier altogether." "All these handsome individuals running about or galloping about in tabs and buttons and gold lace are of no earthly use at all. . . . The soldier in uniform is as out of date today as the man in armor was in 1600." Hence Mr. Wells is grateful to the United States Senate for killing the treaty to end the use of poison gas. He wants the new warfare developed to the fullest extent. He even welcomes the use of deadly bacilli—anything to make war as horrible and as deadly as possible—and he ridicules those who, like *The Nation*, are trying to stop chemical warfare.

Now as to this, Mr. Wells may be right and we wrong. It depends in some measure on whether you believe in setting afloat, in order to end war, forces which may conceivably wipe out whole populations. The question is whether, after such a struggle, there will be enough left of the world for anybody to care whether war goes on or not. But with his contention that the modern soldier is an utter anachronism we are in entire accord, as we are with his assertion that the desire to retain their profession makes the "professionally belligerent class, officers, their womenkind, and every sort of person who upon occasion wears uniform and a sword, and is entitled to a salute," favor war. The officers often believe that they do not favor it. They sententiously remark that they are the ones who cannot favor war, since it is they who pay the price. But the possibility of war they insist upon; for otherwise they would be kept out of jobs. Hence their bitterness against all pacifists who are bent on eliminating the fighters as well as war. Hence their growing fury because some churches begin to attack war seriously—it was an American Major General who denounced the American churches a couple of months ago in New York because, he said, the churches were becoming pacifist! As Mr. Wells shows, our military believe that they must defend us against the people next door, and the military next door believe that our forces are only waiting to spring upon them. Military men everywhere insist that national honor is in their keeping, and their "dread" of war was well illustrated by a recent dispatch in the militaristic New York *Herald Tribune*, which reported the army and navy men in Washington as being furious at the inaction of the Government in the Mexican crisis—they wanted to show Mr. Coolidge how to deal with Mexico.

Every thesis Mr. Wells lays down he could prove to the hilt in this country. Many competent witnesses declare that Englishmen do not want war today; that the bands may still play for an expedition to China or some other remote clime, but that England is through for the present with any really first-class war. They may be right; we hope so; but certainly here in America we are more belligerent than ever before, and, as Mr. Coolidge boasted recently, we have 610,000 men under arms annually —nearly as many as the German standing army of 1914— as a result of the war to end war. We now have nearly 100,000 reserve officers, and at least 22,000 active army and navy officers who are propagandizing for war and military training and have adopted the Prussian military ideals for which we once excoriated the Kaiser and his group. An active lieutenant colonel has just been speaking throughout Illinois by order of the War Department, seeking to create an opinion against the Congress—whose creature the army should be—and to develop sentiment in favor of larger war appropriations. Press dispatches have reported the War Department as determined to put a reserve officer in every hamlet and town to create nationalistic and "patriotic," i. e., militaristic, feeling. The army and navy propagandists are everywhere aided by big business men.

Of this there has been a most interesting example in Detroit, where there has been a struggle between the pro-war business men and the churches which would astound Mr. Wells. There the Board of Commerce has compelled the weak-kneed and cowardly Y. M. C. A. to adopt a resolution approving of "the National Defense Act, as amended in 1920, which provides for the voluntary organization of Reserve Officers' Training Corps camps"—a resolution received by the board with "delight and satisfaction." Why was the board so concerned? Not because of any imminent danger of foreign invasion; not because the big business men have the slightest knowledge whether the summer training camps have any military value or not. Their concern was revealed at a meeting between some of the board and a few protesting ministers. According to the Detroit *Free Press*, "those favoring the Defense Act said that adequate preparation was the *bulwark against revolution.*" There you have it. The United States army from 1866 to 1898 numbered only 25,000. Was big business interested? Not at all. But the situation has changed now. The World War gave a Socialist or Communist government to nearly every country in Europe. It released new ideas which terrify the American business men. Hence they back the training camps and the R. O. T. C., not for the military training given but for "the ideals of citizenship" inculcated there by the military preceptors. General Pershing hardly speaks of military instruction in his appeals for the camps; he calls them a great school of citizenship. Well he may. Blind obedience to the present order is what the business backers of the camps want. No liberal-minded or anti-war person would be allowed to speak at them, nor would anybody be permitted to quote President Coolidge's saying of October 6, 1925, that "we know, and everyone knows, that these old [military] systems, antagonisms, and reliance on force have failed," and that "no nation ever had an army large enough to guarantee it against attack in time of peace or insure it victory in time of war." If General Pershing thinks at all he knows that Mr. Wells is just about correct when he declares that "it is the country which has the courage to scrap its army most completely which may come nearest to winning in the next great war," and that the military training at the camps is worthless.

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Poincaré's Achievement

ELECTIONS are coming in France in 1928, and politicians there as elsewhere adjust their actions to such contingencies. Accordingly it is safe to predict that the French Parliament will not again be asked to ratify the Mellon-Bérenger debt agreement until the elections are safely passed. No office-holder who likes his job is going to subject himself to the charge of enslaving his nation to the United States for sixty-two years.

Meanwhile, however, M. Poincaré is performing miracles with French finances, and it is not impossible that he will make a few payments on account without committing himself to the principle of continued payments. No Frenchman believes that France has any clear moral obligation to pay the interallied obligations; but every statesman in office wants to borrow more money, and if by paying a little he can borrow a lot, M. Poincaré is willing to pay a little. The amazing achievement of M. Poincaré is that he is able to pay even a little. His predecessors plunged deeper and deeper into the twin bogs of inflation and depreciation. The 1918 balance-sheet showed a deficit of fifty billion francs, and, while the total declined, even the 1925 record showed more than a billion francs in red ink. The 1926 figures—not the advance predictions but the performance—record a surplus for the first time since the war. Largely by increases in taxation M. Poincaré raised the total revenues of the Government of France from 29 billion francs in 1925 to nearly 43 billions in 1926.

As a result M. Poincaré has held the confidence of the financiers and small investors, both at home and abroad, and has stabilized the franc. His bitterest political enemies admit that his return to office calmed panic-stricken investors. "The crisis of 1926 was primarily a manifestation of internal loss of confidence," says Benjamin M. Anderson, Jr., of the Chase National Bank, "and the extremely low exchange rate of the summer of 1926 reflected the purchases of immense sums in dollars and sterling by the French people themselves." More recently, the French Government has bought back, largely with francs borrowed from the French people, the dollars and sterling in which the same people had invested, and thus accumulated the immense fund of $400,000,000 in foreign exchange which lies behind the recent French shipments of gold to the United States.

Treasury prosperity and industrial prosperity do not always go hand in hand. When the franc was falling there seemed to be work for everybody, and the fundamental impoverishment could be overlooked. Now that M. Poincaré has balanced his budget and first raised and then stabilized the franc—without, however, promising not to raise it still further—business is not so booming. French manufacturers find it more difficult to underbid their competitors across the Rhine and across the Channel. Factories have been closed; unemployment has reached alarming proportions, as was revealed in the International Relations Section of *The Nation* last week.

It is safe to say that no French Government will wish to raise the franc much higher; that would too disastrously increase the burden of the domestic debt. But will the workers, who bear the load of the present method of retrenchment, be able to persuade Parliament to interfere with M. Poincaré's plans? On the eve of an election, the answer is dubious.

A Survival of Savagery

IT is gratifying that not everybody is a victim of the prevailing hysteria in regard to criminals. The so-called "crime wave" is not nearly so real or serious as the current of atavism which it has set in motion. People all over the country, in a panic over the increase in certain crimes of violence, are forgetting all that science and reason have taught the world in recent centuries, and are blindly accepting the doctrine—discredited by all experience—that brutal punishment prevents crime. There is a general descent upon our State legislatures to induce them to make punishments for crime harsher, in the pitiful hope that thereby the lives and belongings of the community at large will be made safer.

It is good, therefore, that in the face of this hysteria the League for the Abolition of Capital Punishment, not content to hide temporarily in a cellar, has come out on the front doorstep to proclaim more loudly than ever its belief that the death penalty not only does not stop murder but again and again prevents the conviction of the slayer. It is a striking fact that the league, recently organized to prosecute a national campaign against the disgrace and folly of capital punishment, has at its head Lewis E. Lawes, warden of New York's Sing Sing penitentiary, while among its other leaders are George W. Kirchwey, a former warden of Sing Sing; Herman M. Adler, criminologist of the Department of Public Welfare of Illinois; Katharine Bement Davis, formerly Commissioner of Correction of New York City; Franz Boas, the distinguished anthropologist of Columbia University; men prominent in political life, like Governor Hunt of Arizona and Senator Copeland of New York; judges on the bench such as William H. Ellis of California and Carl B. Hyatt and Thomas A. Jones of North Carolina; experienced lawyers of the caliber of Clarence Darrow, Arthur Garfield Hays, Samuel Untermyer, and Frank P. Walsh.

The campaign of the league is especially needed at this time in view of the attempt to restore capital punishment in North and South Dakota, Minnesota, and Michigan. Fortunately the legislatures of the three first-named States have refused to countenance the proposal. In California, Nebraska, Massachusetts, and New York there is a definite effort on foot to obtain the abandonment of the death penalty. Eight States have distinguished themselves already by doing away with this barbarism: Michigan, 1847; Rhode Island, 1852; Wisconsin, 1853; Kansas, 1872; Maine, 1887; Minnesota, 1911; North and South Dakota, 1915. Four other States—Arizona, Missouri, Oregon, and Washington—were formerly on the honor roll but reverted to savagery in the post-war "red" scare of 1919-1920.

The Nation does not believe that Henry Ford, because he is America's richest man, is thereby especially wise on social questions, but it finds itself in hearty agreement with what he says on the subject of capital punishment:

> It is wrong to kill a man—everbody agrees to that. It does no good to the man and it does no good to society. Capital punishment is as fundamentally wrong as a cure for crime as charity is wrong as a cure for poverty. . . .
>
> I don't see how any one can vote for capital punishment unless he himself were willing to be the executioner. I think there are mighty few citizens who would be willing to take that job. Then why ask the State, through any citizen, to do the killing? . . .

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Tyrant's Luck

FORTUNE favors Signor Mussolini. He has but to desire a literary festival when, lo and behold, the fates have it already arranged that Publius Virgilius Maro, best and safest of official poets, should have been born two thousand years ago. Almost any other literary anniversary might well have proved a positive embarrassment. What, for example, could any Fascist have said upon the birthday of Horace, who boasted that his prudent heels had carried him swiftly from the field of Philippi; what eulogy could he have uttered upon the memory of Ovid, who was sent by Augustus, the Duce of his age, to ponder his moral and political indiscretions in an exile among the Goths; or how could he have praised the fame and virtue of Tacitus without being reminded how conspicuously the latter was lacking in any enthusiasm for the dictators of Rome? With Virgil, however, it is different. Here was a poet who both served the state and knew his place.

Like Mussolini, Augustus was a man who had set his heart and his will upon the revival of an ancient glory. Under his command Rome glowed with a new prosperity. New buildings rose, new streets spread out, and there is no doubt that the trains would have run once more "on time" if there had been trains to run. And, like Mussolini, too, it was his aim to create a new soul as well as a new body. Rome was to be made heroically race-conscious, sumptuary laws were passed to check the spread of luxurious decadence; and patriotism became obligatory. Nothing more was needed except a national poet and then, behold, the national poet appears. He had spent his early years singing of the bees and flowers in his native province, he had even had an opportunity to observe the summary habits of military saviors when he saw the lands of his neighbors divided among the worthy servants of the great Triumvirate; but he knew his poetic business and the "Æneid" filled the bill. Augustus had his soldiers, his legislators, his administrative officers, and now he had his poet too.

No other great poem was ever so completely built according to specifications. No ambitious American inspired by literary editorials was ever more self-conscious in his determination to write the great American novel. The Greeks had their "Iliad" and so, by Jupiter, the Romans should have their "Æneid." It should be indubitably national, it should be artistically faultless, and it should be patriotically inspiring. No critic should be permitted to raise the slightest cavil, but neither should the solid citizen be called upon to make any allowances for the dubious tendencies of art. The "Æneid" should be "clean," "uplifting," and "inspirational." Moreover, it was, by a miracle, all these things.

Lucky in his anniversary, Mussolini has been less fortunate in the choice of his own laureate. Sometime in April he will betake himself to Mantua and there, before thousands of his loyal subjects, reinforced with a delegation of two hundred scholars from the Sorbonne who have signalized their intention of being present, he will congratulate Augustus upon his good fortune. But the chances are that he will not feel equally inclined to congratulate himself and he may even shake a majestic head, more in sorrow than in anger, in the direction of the bald and petulant d'Annunzio who was to have been his Virgil but who, unfortunately, has not turned out so very well.

Checkers

AT the Hotel Alamac, in New York City, Great Britain and the United States have been locked in deadly combat—and the game has been checkers. Those who class this game with tiddledywinks or "old maid" do not know that men spend years trying to master it, that the volumes on the game run into a library, that matches between experts are played for stakes of $500 and $1,000. Samuel Johnson, responsive to everything having to do with the intellect, wrote the dedication for the first important book on checkers in English—William Payne's "Introduction to the Game of Draughts." (In England checkers is called draughts.) Across the Channel, Diderot and other encyclopedists helped to bring out a French work. Edgar Allan Poe, prefacing "The Murders in the Rue Morgue," compared checkers, chess, and whist, awarding the palm of superiority to checkers. "The higher powers of the reflective intellect," wrote Poe, "are more decidedly and more usefully tasked by the unostentatious game of draughts than by all the elaborate frivolity of chess." The Englishmen this year were surprised to learn that we play checkers better now than in 1905, when last teams from the two countries met; we sent them home this time soundly trounced.

Most men play checkers like a child, trying to keep the opponent from taking two men while losing only one. The expert is busy with different plans. He is looking forty moves ahead; he thinks: "Ha! Let him move there if he wants to. If he does, I'll have 'second position' on him thirty moves from now—and will win in twenty moves more"; or: "In forty moves my king will pin his last two pieces in the upper right-hand corner." Did you ever hear of second position, first position, Bowen's twins, Petterson's drawbridge—all well-known endings?

Who are these British and American experts? It is kindness to them to draw the veil. They do not like to have "the details of their private lives" discussed, as one said when asked what he did for a living. Several of the twelve members of the British team are without visible means of support. James Ferrie, ex-champion of the world, holds a small job with the corporation of Glasgow, Scotland. One is a presser in a London tailor shop, one is satisfied with the description of "laborer," one has collected fares on a Manchester tram. Records of the Americans are similar. One travels with a show, one sells magazines on a crowded corner, one has risen to be clerk in a State office in Lansing, Michigan. Harrah B. Reynolds is a post-office inspector, and T. J. O'Grady is foreman of a large shoe factory.

Checker players do not care what they do, so long as they play checkers. The game is a disease, a passion. It keeps its devotees on the rack, it will not let them sleep, it plays havoc with their efforts to earn livings. Mothers mourn the loss of their sons when they start on checker-playing careers; wives turn prematurely gray. To be a checker-widow is far more pitiable than to be a golf-widow.

What is the secret of its fascination? As well ask why people devote their lives to bridge, to chess, to mountain-climbing, to exploration? It is not a matter of skill. The local champion in the village store plays his game as if he knew all about it. He is absorbed in the game; but if he dreamed of the heights of skill reached by the truly scientific checker-player, he would knock the board off the cracker-barrel in his excitement.

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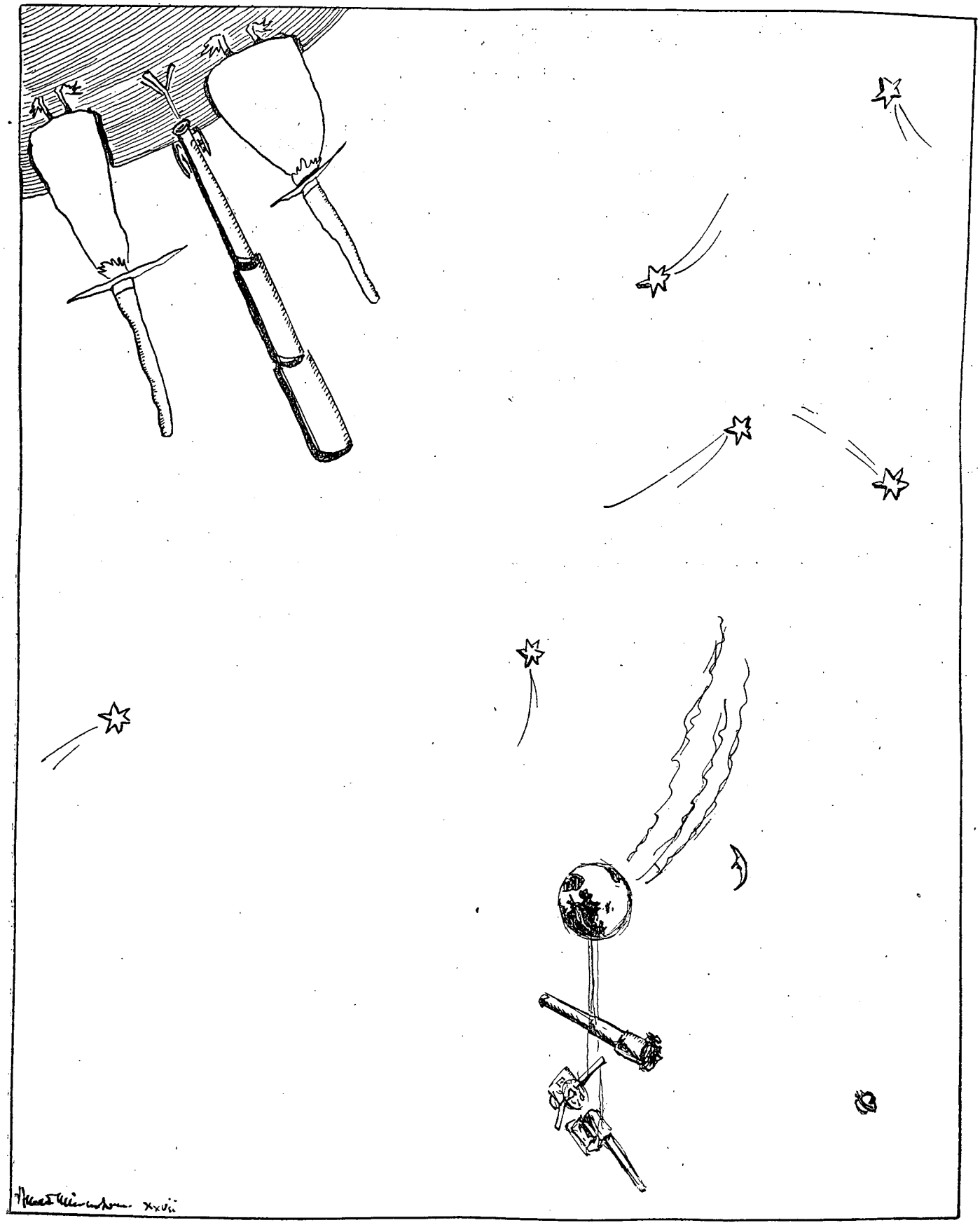

Cosmic Gloom

FIRST ASTRONOMER ON MARS: *The earth doesn't seem as chipper as it used to be.*
SECOND DITTO: *See what's dragging down the poor old thing.*

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A New Ring Around Russia

By LOUIS FISCHER

THE statesmen of Europe have been meeting in Geneva for their periodic love-fest. Such gatherings are always a matter of sweet words of peace for the public and sordid dickerings and businesslike barter of other people's rights behind the scenes. At this March meeting, however, we have seen some unashamed open diplomacy. The European peacemakers are publicly attempting to forge a ring around the Soviet Republic; to form an anti-Bolshevik bloc.

It is plainly stated in every newspaper. "Berlin Hears Britain Would Encircle Russia" reads a New York *Times* headline. "Anglo-Russian Relations, Made More Acute by Crisis in China, Will Have Important Bearing on League Council Meeting at Geneva" announces the *Herald Tribune*. "The forging of a ring of steel around Russia is apparently the object of the determined effort made by the British at the opening of the League of Nations Council today to secure amicable settlement of German-Polish and Rumanian-Hungarian differences." Thus a dispatch from the *World* correspondent at Geneva.

The instigator is Britain; the reason is China.

China is vital to England in various ways. The great Celestial continent is important enough in itself; but as Soviet influence grows in China, the British become nervous about India and the empire. The Cantonese destroy armies with ideas; against such methods no British arsenal has yet forged an effective weapon. There is no doubt that in addition to undermining British trade in China, the Chinese revolution is undermining British prestige in Asia.

The culprit is Russia; the cure is Geneva.

The British are foolish enough to believe that, were it not for the influence of Moscow, the Chinese would for decades have gone on submitting to foreign oppression, unequal treaties, and other invasions of their rights. Since the tide of Kuomintang progress and Soviet influence cannot be stemmed in the East, the British adopt a policy of provocation in the West. They will force Moscow to concentrate attention and energy on what may occur on her Rumanian, Polish, and Baltic borders. Such tactics, Downing Street and the Indian Office hope, will weaken the Bolshevik hand in China.

The League meeting in Geneva offers the opportunity. As an opening barrage, before the meeting, Chamberlain protests to Moscow against anti-British intrigues. This prepares public opinion in Europe and the United States for concerted action by "civilized" nations against the "Red Menace." Then Briand, Stresemann, Chamberlain, Zaleski, and the ministers of a dozen smaller Powers arrive in Switzerland.

Suddenly Italy recognizes Bessarabia, formerly Russian territory, as a part of Rumania. Now Italy and Jugoslavia, their so-called Neutrality Treaty of 1924 notwithstanding, are rivals for Adriatic supremacy, and the Italo-Albanian pact of last autumn was a thrust against the Serb-Croat-Slovene kingdom. Jugoslavia, accordingly, sought support in Paris, Angora, and Moscow this winter, just as Rushdi Bey, the Turkish Foreign Minister, had signed agreements with Russia and Jugoslavia a year ago when the League awarded Mosul to the British.

Jugoslavia is anti-Hungarian, in fact the mortar of the Little Entente, consisting of Jugoslavia, Czecho-Slovakia, and Rumania, is fear or hatred of Hungary. Italy, on the other hand, sees a possible ally in Hungary, especially if she encourages the monarchists to enthrone a king in Budapest. In the Balkans the only country Italy can hope to win is Rumania, whose chief desire is to confirm her title to Bessarabia, seized from the Bolsheviks. Italy can offer Rumania not only confirmation of her title to Bessarabia (England, France, and Japan gave their assent years ago), but also security in regard to Hungary, hitherto the foe of Rumania.

Mussolini's gesture to Rumania therefore means (1) the alignment of Rumania and Hungary on the side of Italy, (2) the complete paralysis of the Little Entente which has been moribund for many a day, and (3) the emergence of Italy as the outstanding Power on the Balkan Peninsula, at the expense of France and of England as well. London does not object, for the move which weakens her in Southeastern Europe has the same effect on her rival, France, gives international sanction to Rumania's seizure of Bessarabia from Russia, and, most important, definitely places Italy with the anti-Soviet forces. "Britain's Hand Seen in Italy's Bessarabian Act" is the *Herald Tribune's* correct caption over a message from Rome. To balance the scales, Italy lands troops in Shanghai—to please the British, of course, rather than to protect non-existent Italian interests. Such are the devious ways of international diplomacy.

The British, then, have scored at least a partial victory. But in addition to Italy, they need Poland and Germany, and those of the Baltic states which are not yet won. Hitherto it has been an axiom that the country which enjoys the support of Germany cannot have that of Poland, and vice versa. As long as France was anti-German, Poland was pro-French. After the threat of Thoiry, however, Warsaw began flirting with England. Great Britain's purpose is to bring both Germany and Poland into the anti-Bolshevik bloc, which can only be done by eliminating the factors which make for German-Polish enmity—the Corridor, Danzig, Memel, and questions of German frontier forts. This is the hardest nut Chamberlain has to crack and he may break his teeth on it. At Geneva, nevertheless, Chamberlain and Briand arranged a meeting between Stresemann and Zaleski, the Polish Foreign Secretary. They had not been on speaking terms, and the great problem was whether Stresemann would go to Zaleski or Zaleski to Stresemann. The matter was settled by having Stresemann's assistant visit the Pole, after which the Pole visited Stresemann. Thus was national honor saved. But much more than this is required. The Poles are not likely to give up the Corridor or Danzig or both in exchange for the Baltic port of Memel. (In exchange for Memel the Lithuanians, who have moved closer to the Poles since the Fascist putsch in Kovno last December, are supposed to get Vilna. But will the Poles surrender that prize?) On the other hand, Germany may be willing to come to at least a temporary understanding with Poland—forgetting territorial disputes for a while—if she gets concessions in the Rhineland, if reparation payments are reduced, if Allied troops evacuate Germany, if the Saar coal mines are relinquished, if Eupen and Malmedy are returned, or if she gets an oversea colony. And a British subsidy to Poland,

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euphemistically styled a loan, may soften Warsaw's heart toward Germany.

This is Chamberlain's trying task: to win both Germany and Poland for the *cordon sanitaire* around the Soviet Union. Apart from the difficulty of reconciling the nations directly concerned, France presents the chief obstacle. A continental anti-Bolshevik combination under the aegis of Great Britain must ipso facto disturb France. The two Powers bordering on the Channel are again competing for supremacy in Europe, and the anti-Russian *cordon* sponsored by England is perhaps only another phase of this age-long struggle. It is not clear how France will act. Briand helped Chamberlain to bring Stresemann and Zaleski together. On the other hand, the concessions to Germany in the Rhineland would be at the expense of France and, unless the scheme is very ambitious and includes the floating of the German railway bonds which England blocked after Thoiry, would bring France nothing except the doubtful pleasure of playing second fiddle to London. With Italy in the bloc and Jugoslavia out of it, and with England running it, French adherence seems at least doubtful. Turkey, too, will remain outside. Britain's victory at Geneva in 1925 when she got Mosul has left the Turks in a sour mood; and Italy's ambitions in Asia Minor will tend to throw them into the arms of Russia.

No anti-Bolshevik bloc can be perfect. The men responsible for it do not hope for complete success. Their aim is to harass the Soviet Government and impede its economic advance. They expect, quite fatuously I believe, that the "conservative" Stalin, appalled by the array of Powers against Russia, will capitulate, call off the "offensive" in China, and open the gates to foreign capitalism. This last may be the bait to Germany: German reparations payments and Germany's whole economic structure depend on export markets of which Russia is the most promising. She would hardly risk the loss of Soviet buyers were it not for a hope that opposition to Moscow would be a good investment, forcing the Bolsheviks to be more lenient in dealing with foreign concerns. (I do not take Stresemann's speech to the correspondents, denying British overtures and regretting Russian isolation, as anything more than a bid for better terms. The same day's cables include a dispatch regarding the League's authorization of a loan to Esthonia provided Esthonia gives "a sufficient guaranty that she will not sign a neutrality treaty with Russia.")

The bloc will not mean war. Europe is too exhausted to venture into another period of self-destruction now. But this dress rehearsal at Geneva is an indication of what may happen in the future when Britain and her friends on the Continent are better fixed and more united. The Bolsheviks are not far from the mark when they speak of the danger of capitalist aggression with the League as its spearhead. Russia, however, is a gigantic country. Her strength is her own wealth—natural, human, moral, ideological—and the need which foreign countries have of doing business with her. The concert of some nations against her may retard her economic progress, expose her to financial boycotts and to partial commercial blockades (she has experienced not a few already), but they can hardly interfere with her industrial rise or with her ascendancy in Asia.

Working the Women Workers

By ANN WASHINGTON CRATON

ALTHOUGH there are some eleven million women in industry in the United States, only a small proportion, perhaps 250,000, are in the trade unions. The common attitude of most union leaders is that women cannot be organized. Actually, the problem is a different one: how to fit women into the trade unions. The admission of women involves new policies, new responsibilities, and new difficulties. Rather than face them and make the necessary adjustments, union officials have preferred to "let the women alone."

The life of a union official is hard. The work is discouraging and exhausting. The reward for a man is a higher office, with increasing responsibility. He becomes manager of his local union or joint board. He becomes a national officer. There are no such opportunities for women. Women have successfully held minor offices in their local unions. They have been efficient business agents and organizers. Rarely have they held offices of importance. A few women have been international officers, but no woman has ever been on the Executive Council of the American Federation of Labor. Most of the few women who have attained prominence in the trade-union movement have discreetly tried to play the union game as men play it. They have realized that their prestige and position were at stake. On the theory that a poor union is better than no union they have steadily refused to embarrass labor officials by a vigorous protest at the discriminations and inequalities to which women have been subjected in the unions. As a result they have been unable to achieve any outstanding leadership among the rank and file of trade-union women.

When women come into the unions they are, generally speaking, controlled by men officials, particularly when the women in the trade, both organized and unorganized, outnumber the men. I remember one prominent international officer who said, referring to a woman's local which had made remarkable strides under the leadership of women officers: "These women need to be protected. They have a membership now which is ample to pay a good salary to a man official whom we shall appoint. From now on we are going to have iron control over this local." Another official bitterly condemned workers' education classes in his union. The attendance had been largely made up of women. "They have all become lefts," said he indignantly. "That is what education for women does. Now see the trouble they are making us."

The struggles of promising rank-and-file girls for recognition have met not only lack of cooperation but often direct sabotage from their trade-union brothers. The case of Sophie comes to mind. Her life had been full of hardships and deprivations. Insufficient and improper food, too little sleep, exposure to all sorts of weather on the picket line in strikes, work in airless and overheated factories ruined her health. She developed bronchitis and throat trouble, while she wore herself out mentally and spiritually over the injustices and inequalities she experienced in the

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union. Sophie had been an active trade unionist for ten years, faithfully supporting the machine and loyal to the administration. She was an invaluable lieutenant. A man who had worked as faithfully for his organization would have been taken care of. But Sophie, who had never been allowed to hold a paid job as organizer on the regular staff, had to borrow money and accumulate debts for the vacation she had to take. Instead of returning to her own city, Sophie decided she would work in other clothing centers to obtain first-hand knowledge about the activities of women trade unionists. In Chicago she had been a fast and experienced pocket-maker, earning $50 to $60 a week in the season. To her dismay, in New York union shops, this proved to be a man's job. No woman could be a pocket-maker. No woman had ever been allowed to work at such a well-paid operation, although her international union loudly proclaimed that it stood for "Equal Work, Equal Pay, and Equal Opportunities" for women workers. Sophie could have found work in open or scab shops, where women pocket-makers were preferred to men, as they were paid less wages. She refused this compromise and finally took a job as a corset-worker at $18 a week, an unorganized trade which she had learned as a girl of fourteen. At night the men union officials unhesitatingly called upon her to hold shop-meetings with groups of girls from union shops, who had been forced to accept a severe cut in wages as a concession to the boss, to protect the wages of the men. These angry girls were refusing to pay dues. Sophie, herself bitterly resentful, had to face her furious sister workers and urge them to support their union and not to work in scab shops.

Millinery in its infancy was regarded as exclusively a women's trade. Hats were all hand made, before the comparatively recent machine era, when the men cap-makers saw a chance at employment in their own off-season, and invaded this domain of women. The milliners at that time were largely middle-aged and highly conservative. Accustomed always to working in shops where only women were employed, they believed that it was not "nice" to work with men. It meant that they could no longer allow themselves the comfort of working in old-fashioned "Mother Hubbards." They disliked the idea of sitting by men, who not only worked without collars and ties, but discarded their shirts as well. The women considered it offensive and improper.

When the first men came into the shops and sat down at the machines the women indignantly stood up and marched out. But they had to march back again, quickly, to save their jobs. The union soon organized and supported the men. The women were admitted to the union with an initiation fee $10 lower than that paid by the men and weekly dues 10 cents less. Their wages, however, were between $20 and $30 less than the men's scale. The bitterness occasioned then increased through the years and could never be overcome. The old-timers gradually dropped out, to be replaced by younger women, mostly the new immigrants from Russia who belonged to the generation of the Revolution. They have made an idealistic and enthusiastic fight for their principles and recently have greatly improved their position in the union.

Women coming into the trade-union movement have an optimism and freshness that men officials are likely to resent. They upset the traditional routine. A prominent woman was engaged to direct an organization campaign involving thousands of women. Definite action was imperative in a month, when a wage agreement expired. In twenty-four hours she had appalled the men officials, who had formerly drifted along complacently and casually, with a membership large enough to pay their salaries and with no opposition to reelection. The campaign to them had been merely a gesture to the membership. They had not intended to ask for a wage increase for their women members. It had been tacitly understood between the employers and the union officials that the men's wage increases should be granted.

Miss S., the new organizer, was a shrewd politician. She was determined to maneuver herself and her policies into such a position that her work would not be wasted. She started with a veritable office revolution. Nothing was sacred. She moved the furniture and threw out all the old, broken chairs that had been piled in corners for years. She appropriated an office for herself, a small room long regarded as the exclusive property of a clique that played pinochle. She installed a desk and a telephone. She had an electrician arrange proper lighting for night work. She even had the water cooler moved; it had blocked the hallway, contrary to all fire laws, for a year. Miss S. now turned her energies to the organization campaign. Tons of union literature had to be distributed through the shops. Instead of playing cards, the loungers were forced to fold circulars and lick stamps. Girls from the open shops as well as from the union shops flocked to the office. The men officials were terrified. They were forced into a position where they had to make demands for the women. The employers were furious. Miss S. was triumphant. She now went aggressively around the shops and, as a result, she began to be arrested almost daily. The first time it happened a crowd of excited girls rushed into the office, demanding bail and a lawyer. The men took the situation cheerfully. A group began to play cards. It was Tomasso, the Italian business agent, who mildly voiced the sentiments of all. "Let her stay in jail," said he, persuasively, to the girls. "She's all right. Let her stay until we can have a nice, quiet little executive-board meeting without her. Then we will get her out. Ladies should stay at home. If ladies won't stay at home, let them stay in jail."

In Newark, New Jersey, last summer, a campaign was initiated to try out the American Federation of Labor's Tentative Plan to Organize Women which had been adopted at the 1925 convention. It was the first move on the part of the federation to face the problem of the unorganized women. The plan provided that the various unions in a given locality should make a joint intensive drive to organize women under their jurisdiction. Each union was to supply its own organizers and its own technique and the particular literature necessary for its special trade problems. The impetus given by such systematic and thorough work progressing simultaneously in different industries would create a trade-union consciousness among women workers and have a tremendous educational value in the entire community.

A legislative agent of the federation—Edward F. McGrady—sent from Washington as an "observer," was in charge of the drive. But neither he nor the unions involved cared whether it was successful, and consequently it was a failure. Another woman and myself, both experienced in organization work, made an effort to take part in the Newark campaign. The legislative agent agreed to consider us as

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organizers and made an appointment to discuss the campaign with us. He took us to lunch at his favorite restaurant in the theatrical district of New York. We selected a modest lunch, appalled at the high prices, while he consumed a most elaborate one. It was apparent that he had repented of his rashness in interviewing us, for now he would not have us. He used all the old arguments to discourage us: women could not be organized; women did not want to be organized; women had been organized, at great trouble and expense, and their unions had not lasted. We countered on every point.

By this time, he was smoking expensive cigars. "You say you want to work with women; I know a good place for you—go work for the Y. W. C. A."

"We want to work with women in the Newark campaign," we answered promptly.

He was much annoyed, but he made another effort: "Why don't you forget all this business and leave the labor movement to men? It's too rough for women. Why don't you get married?"

"Perhaps we are married," we answered cheerfully; "we still want to organize women into trade unions in Newark."

"You are hopeless," he said angrily. He fled from us in a taxi. His parting words were no more encouraging: "If you want to organize women, you'll have to wait until the federation gets around to it. We think the time isn't ripe yet. It will not be for another twenty-five or fifty years. The trouble with you two is that you are ahead of your time."

Must the millions of exploited women, miserably underpaid and overworked, wait until the A. F. of L. gets around to them—in twenty-five or fifty years? The slogan "Organize the Unorganized" was not raised in vain in the Passaic strike. Passaic has proved beyond doubt that the organization of men and women can take place side by side, if the purpose exists and the work is undertaken on a large scale in the basic industries. Let it be upon an equal footing, so that a new spirit and new standards may rebuild the trade unions and create a vigorous, honest, and progressive American labor movement.

Blessed Are the Sons of Ham

By GEORGE S. SCHUYLER

THE machine age is a dull, monotonous age with little adventure, little thrill, little laughter. Man needs these things, so he avidly peruses the so-called funny sheets; goes to the theater, to prize-fights and golf tournaments; reads books; sits in smoky, noisy cabarets; goes hunting, hiking, slumming, or mountain climbing. The thrills and laughs of the average American are sporadic—usually bought and paid for. Such a possibility as an entire lifetime of laughs and thrills is never dreamed of.

Yet there are people in the United States who have the enviable privilege of being continuously entertained. They are always sure of at least one thrill or laugh every day the Lord sends. At least thirty times a month they find opportunities for laughter or experience that skipping-a-beat of the heart, the chilly spasm, the catch at the throat, the loss of speech that accompany the honest-to-goodness thrill. They are used to it now. They couldn't escape it and slip into the bored existence of their fellow-citizens even if they wished to. There are those in this group, of course, who have tired of this life of excitement and fun. Sometimes they would welcome a little of the monotony of which the rest of their fellow-citizens have abundance. But the more intelligent members of the group would not think of relinquishing this gift of the gods.

I refer, of course, to the Aframericans. You are surprised? Of course. You have long looked upon the black citizen as a tragic figure—a pathetic figure—a helpless transplanted child of the jungle caught in the cruel meshes of machine civilization. But usually he isn't that at all. He really enjoys his sojourn in the Land of the Free. Take myself, for instance. I am a black, unadulterated Negro. I do not regret it or go about with mournful countenance bewailing my lot. I do not clamor with the Garveyites for emigration to Africa. On the contrary I enjoy life here in America. I glance at my white brother and sister with amusement tinged with pity. Pathetic figures, I murmur. So industriously and earnestly scampering all over the lot in search of the thrills and laughs which are my birthright. Would I change places with the Nordic? Never!

Take dining or lunching, for instance. Monotonous, uneventful routine for most of you. Just the same old shoveling down of food, paying the check, and tipping the waiter. For me a laugh or a thrill, or both. Probably I am busy in the reference room of the New York public library when the pangs of hunger assail me. Instead of returning to the far-off black ghetto, I stroll into a nearby cafe. I am well dressed and have ample funds. If I were a white man I might be included under that uncertain term "gentleman." Entering, I experience a thrill of anticipation. The customers look up, shocked and annoyed. Eating stops. Breaths are caught. The silence is ominous. A worried waiter steps up with an agitated inquiry. What do I want? (What *would* a person want in a restaurant?) Sorry, all the tables are reserved. I am the cynosure of all eyes. My presence creates a stir—a problem. I wonder whether I shall be seated or thrown out. If seated, shall I be placed behind a screen or at the last table near the kitchen door? If I seat myself, how long shall I be kept waiting for service? Meanwhile the waiter and manager are conferring. Customers cast baleful or amused glances. There is much whispering. I cannot help but enjoy all this. Over a hundred proud Nordics nonplussed by a lone Negro! It is a fitting climax to a day spent among musty tomes.

Suppose I decide to go to a theater. If it be in the liberal North or East, I approach the ticket-window and ask for orchestra seats. The clerk assumes that look with which I am so familiar. He reaches up and gets the tickets. When seated, I find that all the Negro audience is together. I indulge in a sardonic smile. In addition to his other tasks, this poor clerk must take special precautions lest a black

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clergyman be seated next to a white crook. That, of course, must never happen. Or, more frequently, I am told that the seats I desire have been reserved or sold. I stand aside but where I can watch the clerk. Soon a white man approaches, buys a seat in the section I asked for, and enters the theater. I glance at the ticket agent. He looks through his grille at me. I smile. He blushes. A look of annoyance comes over his face. That is my reward; it fills me with glee—just that expression.

Perhaps I am in the South. I wish to take a young woman to the theater. She belongs to an old family—seventy-five years of merchants, physicians, teachers. She herself is a college graduate. Ordinarily I would be forced to buy orchestra seats with such a companion. At least good balcony seats. But Negroes can sit only in the gallery in this theater. Thus I am saved money, and what was designed as a humiliation is really a help. I am not a snob. There are sociable souls in the gallery. They laugh and cry with childish frankness. Cold propriety does not inhibit them. I enjoy them as much as I do the performance. Hence I have double the enjoyment at one-third the price I would have paid in New York. The few whites in the gallery look up disdainfully from their seats in the lower portion. All these things used to infuriate me. Now I have a sense of humor.

The street car affords similar amusement. There is an empty seat next to a rather dowdy female of the superior race. She is reading a tabloid newspaper with great interest—spelling out the words under the pictures. I take the empty seat and open my New York *Times*. She glances disdainfully at me out of the corner of her eye and moves as far away as possible. That tickles me. I smile in my *Times*. She scowls in her tabloid.

Or I am in Memphis, Tennessee. It is my first visit. I hail a car. The sign says "Front Entrance." I start to climb aboard. Fresh from the North, I do not know that Negroes must enter from the rear as well as sit in the rear. The motorman, a stringy Mississippian, glances at me balefully. "Get in the rear door, boy!", he growls belligerently, and makes a step toward me. My heart leaps to my throat. Negroes have been beaten and jailed for no greater offenses. I go to the rear of the car. The conductor and the white passengers cast dark looks in my direction.

Or I am en route to Muskogee from Fort Smith. A surburban car meets the train. I enter the car and go to the rear. Unthinkingly I sit down. I turn to the unfinished story in my magazine. "Hey there you! Niggers up in front!" thunders the conductor. What a start that gives me! I grip the magazine! I run the gantlet of eyes and find a seat in front. I feel rather bewildered. How was I to know that Negroes sat in front when elsewhere they sit in the rear? I lay awake that night, thinking of it. What prize-fight or baseball game could have given me such excitement? What adventure in the jungles or mountains could have so upset me?

There was the day in Paris, Texas. It was the policy of my paper to send my salary and expenses by telegraph at the end of the week. The clerk at the telegraph office has not sufficient funds to cash the order—a large one. She indorses it and sends me across the street to the largest hotel to get it cashed. All the banks are closed. I must leave for Texarkana that evening. I enter the hotel lobby and march toward the desk. I think only of getting my money and leaving town; Negroes have been burned at the stake here. Everyone looks at me curiously. I, a humble black man, suddenly command the attention of the whole lobby.

"Take off your hat, boy!" The grating voice of the desk clerk sears me through. My heart leaps in my throat. I had entirely forgotten about the hat. Nearly everyone else has on a hat. All the guests and loiterers are waiting to see what I am going to do. Of course I hastily remove my hat. I must avoid trouble and delay. I have a schedule to make. I reach the desk after seeming centuries of travel through the ominously silent lobby. I politely tell the clerk my mission. He cashes the order. Handing me the bills, he asks: "What are you—president of one of those nigger colleges?" thinking, doubtless, of the large sum in my hand.

"No," I reply, "I'm just a newspaperman. It's pretty hard for a boy to get a job as college president." The clerk is nonplussed. He flushes. But I have reached the door by this time. He has not yet found words. His discomfiture amuses me in the midst of my perturbation. I have vanished before he finds himself. A thrill and a laugh to help me on my journey. Both are lasting. It's just as if it happened yesterday. To a white man Paris, Texas, would be just another soon-to-be-forgotten one-horse town. I can never forget it.

I am reading a story about American Negroes. The white author has attempted to catch dialect and convey psychology. He has sketched a racial memory background: jungles, leopards, crocodiles, tom-toms, and all the rest of which American Negroes know nothing. There is much about primal instincts and the veneer of civilization. The author's ignorance and the editor's gullibility are equally refreshing. I laugh as you would laugh at the imaginings of a very small child. I laugh too at the thousands who will devour this trash.

Another source of daily amusement to me is the attitude of my white brethren toward me and my folk. I am acquainted with many Negro poets, contractors, labor leaders, journalists, social workers, physicians, novelists. I know a black telegraph operator and a brown fellow who is superintendent of a brickyard. It does not strike me as strange that Negroes should be doing all sorts of work. But white people continue to be amazed when they hear of Negroes having such vocations. They regard successful Negroes as freaks, along with trained seals and infant chess prodigies. "How wonderful!" they say. Or, "Fancy, a Negro novelist!" Such delicious morsels stay with me for days.

Job-hunting has always been productive of great entertainment. I don't have to do it; I just go around for the fun of it. I inquire about those positions which I know are meant for whites only. I enjoy myself in watching their facial expressions and listening to the often halting prevarications and faltering excuses. Once I was offered a good job in the New York office of a sugar company. The position was secured by a friend over the telephone. The only slip was that my friend neglected to mention that I was a Negro. When I walked into the palatial offices in the Battery Place Building, there was much conferring and studied courtesy. I enjoyed the whole thing hugely. Of course I didn't get the job.

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Every night the Negro is in danger. I walk down a dark street or cut across the park. Suddenly, turning a corner, I come face to face with a white woman. Will she get frightened and scream? I never know. There lies the uncertainty. I have had two such experiences. It was many hours before I became normal, yet in both cases the woman had quickly recovered herself. Suppose she hadn't? Such eventualities keep one on the alert, taut, expectant.

In 1912 I was in the 25th Infantry, stationed seven miles outside of Seattle. A white woman, well known to everyone at the post, claimed to have been assaulted by one of the soldiers. Feeling, as the newspapers say, was running high. There was an immediate investigation. Grim white officers diligently sought clues. The stalwart soldiers were lined up. Long rows of black Americans in the blue uniforms of Uncle Sam. The woman, accompanied by the adjutant, marched down the line peering into each man's face. Every once in a while she would pause and scan a scared doughboy. To most white folks "all coons look alike." There was reason to be alarmed. She stopped in front of me! Cold chills ran up my spine; gooseflesh sprouted; my kinky hair rose. She whispered to the company commander and pointed at me. I was taken to the orderly room. There I was accused of guilt. Just as I was about to be led to the guard house, the white first lieutenant came in and testified that I had been doing some work for him at the hour the woman said she was attacked. A narrow escape. It was a long time before I got over that one.

During the war days patriotism was running high. Good Americans were being asked to "give until it hurts." Four-minute men were assuring Negro audiences that the United States was also their country to be defended by bonds and bayonets. I am an officer. I am walking to the railroad station en route to Philadelphia. The camp is near Baltimore. Four white privates meet me face to face. They look me squarely in the eye and then pass without saluting. Many whites and blacks are watching. At that time I had been a soldier for six years. Saluting is neither novel nor onerous. It is just part of the military routine. A real soldier no more objects to it than a civilian does to shaking hands. Besides, it is compulsory on both officer and enlisted man. The plain affront gives me a start. Relations are none too good between the races in this camp. I don't want a scene. I would rather let it pass, marking it down to ignorance. But what will those black soldiers think? Will they continue to respect me? These things flash through my mind. Sharply I call the white privates back. On the way, they pass a white officer and salute him promptly and properly. They return and salute me likewise when I upbraid them. I wonder who feels the more uncomfortable, they or I? Suppose they had not obeyed me? I think about it all the way to Baltimore. Such things upset you as much as being caught in a bar-room brawl. Of course, I smile now at the incongruity of the situation: Four white boys from Dixie, probably, always accustomed to a certain relation between whites and blacks. Suddenly a great war places them in a situation where the tables are turned. It is hard for them to change, even to make the world safe for democracy. Patriotism and prejudice!

And so it goes—day in and day out, year in and year out, for a lifetime. Any Negro in America has similar experiences daily. Most Negroes, of course, are too thin-skinned to delight in many of the situations in which they find themselves. That requires a developed sense of humor. But nearly all of them get the thrills. It is their social heritage. So they love America and are loyal citizens, ever ready to shed their blood to maintain its independence and the liberties vouchsafed every citizen by the Constitution. For my part, I would never be able to stand all this noise and smoke and stone and steel and machinery, if my blackness did not bring diversion and relief. Thrice blessed are we sons of Ham.

Precipitation and Presidents

By ROBERT MARSHALL

A COUPLE of years ago, while engaged in a study of the correlation between hemlock growth and rainfall in northern Massachusetts, I observed a peculiar biological-political relationship in the annual rings of the trees. Three marked periods of retarded growth were manifest, just prior to 1828, 1884, and 1912. These are the years which also represent the three great Republican catastrophes, when the right-wing domination of the White House was broken after protracted periods of power. Now I would gladly credit many obnoxious results to the protective tariff, but it did seem a bit unreasonable to blame it for a stagnation in tree growth. It was necessary to find a more logical explanation, or attribute the observed phenomenon to chance.

Since my study indicated that precipitation did have a marked effect on the hemlock growth, it struck me that possibly the same lack of rainfall which caused the trees to wane also caused the party in power to wane. Several economists have recognized the correlation between rainfall and economic cycles. It is just one step further to carry the economic results to their political conclusion.

We are blessed in these United States with a national baby show and a national beauty contest, a national flag and a national flower, a national game and a national guard, a national song and a national cemetery. Almost everything seems to be nationalized except the weather. That still maintains a complete regional individuality. While the Californian is damning one of the driest summers on record, the New Yorker may be cussing one of the wettest. Therefore, in comparing political results with climatic conditions, it is necessary to choose some specific regional precipitation for the comparison.

The weather data of the twenty-two stations which have continuous records going back as far as the middle of the nineteenth century were carefully analyzed. It was found that the mean annual precipitation in the New England and Middle Atlantic States, for the four years prior to each election, had a distinct bearing on the result of that election. The earliest quadrennial period for which adequate data were available was 1825-1828, while after 1884 the striking correlation between presidential succession and pre-

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cipitation in the Northeast ceased. But over a sixty-year period, in seven cases out of eight when the rainfall was greater than normal, the party in power, regardless of which one it was, continued to stay in power. On the other hand, in six cases out of seven when the rainfall was less than normal, a new swarm of political parasites descended on Washington. The basic figures for these statements are shown in Table 1.

TABLE 1

Presidential Succession and Precipitation in the Northeast

Date	Precipitation Amount in Inches	Precipitation Relation to Normal	Presidential Succession
1825-1828	42.28	—	Change
1829-1832	46.08	+	Continuation
1833-1836	37.47	—	Continuation
1837-1840	37.98	—	Change
1841-1844	40.25	—	Change
1845-1848	40.36	—	Change
1849-1852	42.92	—	Change
1853-1856	43.59	+	Continuation
1857-1860	44.49	+	Change
1861-1864	45.10	+	Continuation
1865-1868	46.12	+	Continuation
1869-1872	47.89	+	Continuation
1873-1876	44.13	+	Continuation
1877-1880	43.38	+	Continuation
1881-1884	42.27	—	Change
Mean	42.95		

The data presented are based on the records of the following weather stations: New Bedford, Boston, Waltham, New York, Albany, Troy, Lowell, Providence, Amherst, Newark, Springfield, Lake Cochituate. These are the only Northeastern stations dating back to 1850.

From 1885 to 1924 the seven States which the Bureau of Census designates by the formidable group name of West North Central have proved to be political hygrometers. Their climate, with the exception of those portions lying in the middle Mississippi Valley and in the extreme western part beyond the 100th meridian, has indicated presidential succession just as surely as did the Northeastern weather at an earlier period. The four wetter-than-normal terms were all followed by a continuation of the party in office, while the six drier than normal terms produced five political upheavals. Table 2 gives the specific data.

TABLE 2

Presidential Succession and Precipitation in West North Central States

Date	Precipitation Amount in Inches	Precipitation Relation to Normal	Presidential Succession
1885-1888	26.48	—	Change
1889-1892	26.21	—	Change
1893-1896	24.61	—	Change
1897-1900	27.88	+	Continuation
1901-1904	28.90	+	Continuation
1905-1908	29.61	+	Continuation
1909-1912	25.01	—	Change
1913-1916	27.95	+	Continuation
1917-1920	25.02	—	Change
1921-1924	26.24	—	Continuation
Mean	26.79		

The data presented are based on the records of the following weather stations: Duluth, Minneapolis, Moorehead, and St. Paul, Minnesota; Des Moines, Iowa; Kansas City, and Oregon, Missouri; Dodge City, Hays, Independence, Manhattan, and Wakeeney, Kansas; Omaha, Nebraska; Huron, South Dakota; Bismarck, North Dakota. These are the only stations within the specified limits of the West North Central region dating back to 1885.

Summing up the records of the two regions over a period of 100 years, in 22 cases out of 25 the quadrennial rainfall predicted the next President. The party in power was victorious after a precipitation greater than normal, and was vanquished after a precipitation less than normal in 88 per cent of the presidential elections. It can be shown statistically that were chance alone operating the probability of coincidence between precipitation and presidential succession in 22 instances out of 25 would be only 1 in 14,603. Consequently it seems almost certain that there is some significance to the observed relationship.

Just what that significance is can be answered less surely. Fundamentally it seems obvious that the effect of rainfall on crops is the predominant factor. To illustrate, H. L. Moore[1] has found in Illinois that "the yield per acre of four representative crops—corn, hay, oats, and potatoes—is associated with the amount of rainfall of their respective critical periods of growth. In three out of the four cases the degree of correlation lies between $r = .589$ and $r = .666$." On the basis of these high correlations he concludes that "the fundamental, persistent cause of the cycles of crops is the rhythmical movement in the conditions of the weather represented by the cycles in the amount of rainfall." And so a natural chain begins to form. Scant rainfall means poor crops, poor crops mean hard times, and hard times mean discontent. On the other hand abundant rains mean relative prosperity, and when the average man is prosperous the higher issues might as well retire gracefully.

There are certain apparent objections to this theory, some of which can be partially met. For instance it may be asked why the correlation between rainfall and political change should suddenly shift from the Northeast to the West North Central region in 1884. The answer possibly lies in the relative agricultural importance of these sections. Until about 1860 the Northeast led the country in acreage of improved farm lands. From 1860 through the 1880 census the Ohio Valley States predominated. But since 1890 the West North Central States have held an ever increasing lead. Consequently it would seem reasonable to assume that when the Northeast no longer maintained an important place in the agriculture of the nation, its rainfall no longer served as a barometer of political results. On the other hand the trans-Mississippi States, assuming for the first time a place of importance in crop production, became an accurate indicator.

Henry Ludwell Moore has shown that while economic cycles follow rainfall tendencies, there is a lag of about four years. One would expect this lag to be even more pronounced in political cycles. In fact, a closer correlation was obtained from the rainfall of the four years immediately preceding the election than from any other period chosen.

It is not the purpose of this paper to set up precipitation as an infallible key to our political history. But historians have so emphasized the petty actions of puny politicians that it seems worth while stressing one factor which even the largest campaign fund cannot alter. The ancient Roman politicians may have been wise when they chose Jupiter as their highest deity.

[1] "Economic Cycles: Their Law and Cause." By Henry Ludwell Moore. Macmillan. 1914.

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In the Driftway

THE Drifter's recent ruminations on the beauties of New York City have provoked not only prose protests but also poetical polemics. A communication in verse, signed "Mary Doe et al.," is as unorthodox in its choice of beauty as was the Drifter's list, the citations including an Automat restaurant, the elevated railway station at Eighth Avenue and 110th Street, and Mendel's parcel-room in the Grand Central terminal. The poem, covering several typewritten pages, is too long to reproduce here, as the Drifter has to catch a train at 6:10 p. m., but this is "Canto III":

In this City of sheer beauty, full of sea-shine and of dreams,
There are many things breath-taking—New York's full of gems, it seems.
I'll eliminate the Woolworth Tower and Cleopatra's Needle
And shout of an objet d'art for which e'en babes might wheedle.
There are no doubt finer benches made of marble or of teak
Somewhere in these city limits. Of these I shall not speak.
There are softly tufted cushions in Rolls-Royces you could find,
But give me a less effete small seat of the stimulating kind.
A little seat that's perfect, of which I'll sing to you,
Is in the upper front right corner of a bus of emerald hue.

* * * * *

THIS is the silly season for State legislation, and although our national Congress has quit and gone home, a thousand and one absurdities have been proposed in other quarters. In addition to the perennial proposals for taxing bachelors and spinsters (as if they didn't have troubles enough already), a Chicago clergyman is agitating for a law to create a board of censors in Illinois to regulate dancing, while Tennessee has brought forth a bill to make gossiping a misdemeanor. By way of reprisal several lawmakers have introduced bills intended to spoof their fellow-regulators of manners, morals, and minutiae. At least the Drifter supposes that is the intention, although he can never be sure that a statesman is joking, even when he most ought to be. Nebraska, for instance, was asked to pass a bill limiting damages in suits for alienation of affections or breach of promise to one cent. This bill, its sponsor urged, "would make real romance possible again." Best of all, Senator James W. Finley drafted a bill in Kansas prohibiting the sale of mince pies. "For years," he says, "I have considered the eating of mince pies a national evil. Governor Ben S. Paulen recently was ill after eating mince pie. It is as much the State's business to regulate what we eat as what we smoke and drink."

* * * * *

THE Bisbee (Arizona) *Review* suggests that after we get these proposals on the statute-books we proceed to pass a law against swatting mosquitoes with the left hand between dawn and dusk; a constitutional amendment making it a felony for golfers to describe a game play by play except to the deaf and dumb; and national legislation protecting motor-car drivers against damage suits by pedestrians. "The troubles of this country," it says, "can be soothed only by legislation, and the sooner we get these laws passed the sooner will the masses rise in indignation and vote a billion dollars for a public incinerator in which to burn the superfluous statutes." Alas, the Drifter has no such confidence in the indignation of the masses. THE DRIFTER

Correspondence

Christ's Race

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NATION:

SIR: After two years' residence in Mexico I returned to the United States intending to get myself a position and remain here. In addition to my experience in the States as stenographer, secretary, and office manager, I had acquired in Mexico an adequate knowledge of Spanish, and had become a competent English-Spanish stenographer and correspondent.

One week in New York filled me with pain and loathing for Christian hypocrisy and Jewish ——. I will let you supply the word. One employment agency after another said that much as they would like to send me to any number of available positions for English-Spanish stenographers, they could not do so, because of positive instructions from their clients, Jewish as well as Christian, not to send them any Jews. The feeling of disgust that welled up in me came near to being hatred of my fellow-Jews; if the Christians were known to act any more decently, I would have been willing to change my faith.

I left New York for Boston, my home town. Here too it seems to be taken for granted that even in Jewish business houses a Jewish young man or woman cannot hope to get any high-grade office or executive position. The young Jew is fast acquiring the status of a Negro, with this difference—that the Negro employer never discriminated against members of his own race, whereas Jewish employers are actually doing that.

I may have to return to "barbarous Mexico" to earn a living. There, neither among Jews nor Christians, on the economic field at least, is there the slightest trace of prejudice against anyone on account of race, religion, or color.

Dorchester, Mass., March 5 ELIZABETH GOLDSTEIN

Big Brute Men

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NATION:

SIR: I have never found in your magazine any sympathy for weak and helpless animals, treated more barbarously than even the weakest and most helpless slaves in the age of despots.

Did it ever occur to you that the man who rushes to save his own life in a lifeboat, crowding out the women and children, is no whit more ignoble than the man who is willing to save his life at the cost of the cruelty and brutality practiced in experimenting on little helpless animals? The animals are smaller and weaker than he, so he uses them to protect himself. Is such a life worth protecting and saving?

New York, March 2 MANY YEARS A READER

"Al" Smith's Weak Knees

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NATION:

SIR: "Al" Smith is undoubtedly a better man for the people than is, say, Calvin Coolidge. But I see no reason why genuine Progressives should go into rhapsodies of praise over him as does Mr. Norman Hapgood in one of your recent issues. Governor Smith is a competent administrator, but he is not a Progressive.

His silence regarding Mexico is extremely ominous. Other Catholics, such as Senator David I. Walsh, have spoken against intervention in vigorous terms. On the power of the courts to issue injunctions against peaceful picketing in labor disputes Governor Smith is silent. Yet a Democratic judge in New York City, without the slightest expression of disapproval from Governor Smith, has recently issued one of the most far-reaching injunctions we have ever had. His progressivism in regard to water-power shows how partial and halting his progress-if-ism is. Of course Progressives believe that the State should develop its own water-power. But why not the

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water-power of Niagara Falls as well as that of the St. Lawrence? And why should the State generate electric energy and then sell to private companies for distribution, as Smith proposes? The economies to the consumers in public distribution are at least as great as those in public generation. Smith's proposal is only a very weak-kneed and half-hearted progessivism at best.

Cambridge, Mass., March 5 ALFRED BAKER LEWIS

Blessed Be Democracy

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NATION:

SIR: I wonder if a mere proletarian would be permitted the privilege of a voice in your columns. In a recent editorial you name Soviet Russia as a country where democracy is absent. In Soviet Russia every town and village is astir with workers and peasants assembling in spare hours, arguing and deciding on affairs of the land. Moreover, these workers and peasants, men and women, are making their decisions felt.

Pray, what is democracy? I hear of one democratic country where bankers and oil politicians meet in hotel rooms, nominate and practically insure election of public officials. "Russia destroyed private property" Norman Angell said, according to Keith Hutchison, in *The Nation* of February 16. Soviet Russia confiscated private property and put it to the use of the needy and the nation. By all means let us destroy a nation that dares experiment in mass happiness. What an undemocratic country!

Duarte, California, March 1 G. WEISER

Blasphemy

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NATION:

SIR: Late did I read some smoothly flowing lines,
Wherein a bard not all unknown to fame
Sang well and sweetly of the great god Bacchus.
But as I read how, ere the god was bound,
The bursting grape poured healthful wine, and all
Was bright and beautiful throughout the land,
Before me rose the past that truly was:

Crowding his temples nightly, and by day,
Men worshiped Bacchus (he as yet unbound),
Protected from the view of all profane
Onlookers by the slats of swinging doors,
And windows hung with heavy, opaque curtains.
Such was the nature of this Bacchus-worship
That those who paid him homage bowed them down
In secret holes and corners, whence a stench
Flew out and smote the passer in the face!
They went in men who often came out beasts,
Bereft of reason, and almost of motion.
I turned from jail and pesthouse and from morgue,
Filled with unhappy slaves of smiling Bacchus,
And saw still others bring to squalid sties,
Where dwelt their wives and children, ghastly tidings:
Their all was spent on Bacchus. Nought remained
For food or clothing—nay, none for the landlord!
I saw each temple in the whole broad land
Spread filth, and misery, and wickedness;
And rage possessed me till I stood blaspheming!
I clenched my hands and shook them at his temples,
And in a strangled voice, that could not utter
A thousandth part of my desire, I shouted:
"Perdition seize this Bacchus! Let him perish,
And all his hell-brewed potions perish with him!"

. . . Did we not well to bind that god of madness?

Washington, D. C., March 4 HENRY ROSSITER VEDDER

Modern Martin Luther

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NATION:

SIR: Martin Luther was progressive—and modern. On October 20, 1526, Francis Lambert, at the request of Philip of Hesse, drew up an ordinance known as the Reformation of the Churches of Hesse. To that prince Luther wrote a letter dated January 7, 1527, in which he said:

> I know well and have learned that laws passed prematurely are seldom well obeyed as those legislators who sit apart devising laws may think. Making laws and enforcing them are vastly different things. By this ordinance you would change much arbitrarily, but when some of the reforms have already been put into practice it will be easy to pass the law. Legislation is a great, noble, comprehensive thing, and can not be successful without the spirit of God, for which we must humbly pray. Moderation is necessary; after customs are rooted, laws will follow of themselves.

New Hampton, Ia., February 4 WILLIAM F. ENGELKE

Wanted: Descendants of the Kings

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NATION:

SIR: Can anyone of your readers put me in touch with descendants of Mr. and Mrs. Charles W. King, American residents of Hongkong, China, 1837-1845? King may have been a member of the firm of King and Talbott or of the firm of Talbott Olyphant and Company of New York. In 1837 King aided Dr. Peter Parker, S. Wells Williams, and Dr. Karl Gutzlaff in a voyage in the Morrison from Macao to Tokio, Japan. He probably died on the Indian Ocean September 27, 1845, while on his way home. Because of his interest in early missionary enterprises in the Orient I seek a sketch of his life.

East Cleveland, Ohio, March 1 EARL R. BULL

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Books and Plays

The Corrosive Season

By LYNN RIGGS

The harsh fruit of the land.
Our thirst will have to be slaked, if at all, by this thin
Water on the sand.

If we have demanded this corrosive season
Of drought, if we have bent
Backward from the plow, asking
Even less than is sent,

Surely we may be no bitterer
Than the shrunk grape
Clinging to the wasted stem
It cannot escape.

First Glance

THE opinion which any given reader of "Anthony Comstock: Roundsman of the Lord" (A. & C. Boni: $3) forms of the Great Purifier will depend upon that reader's feeling with regard to the spectacle of ignorance. Ignorance can be either pathetic or terrible, either saddening or maddening; and so Comstock must seem. For there can be no doubt as to the depth of his ignorance. The authors of the book, Heywood Broun and Margaret Leech, know and say that he was an old fool but appear at the same time to have developed a sort of sympathy for him as they went along. And I must confess that I too found him touching. I am appalled at the amount of damage he did—and I am not referring to anything so concrete as the fifteen sinners whom he boasted he had driven to suicide, or the three publishers whom he worried to death and of whom he said that "the world is better off without them." I am thinking rather of the awful advantage gained through him by the dogma of purity—the stench of his clean existence is strong in my nostrils. I am appalled. And still I feel for the farmer boy whose grotesque and probably pathological sense of sin stained the pages of his early diary, the grown man who found no outlet for his great energies save in reading bad books and in raiding evil establishments, the crusading censor who kept an uncouth, plaintive record of his deeds in the name of the Lord, the old warrior who discovered that the world had left him a little behind, fumbling with things it had begun to suspect were not so important after all. I am impressed, that is to say, by the reality of the portrait which Mr. Broun and Miss Leech have so excellently and so patiently drawn—and which, incidentally, the Literary Guild of America has chosen to distribute in the first of its books to go forth.

Anthony never knew the difference between an artist and a mad dog; quacks, abortionists, postcard-mongers, socialists, and poets were all alike in his zealous eyes—the zeal was the thing. He never knew that pornography is not important, and that it may be delightful. He never knew the reason for his passion to "protect" the weak and the young from "dangers" his own weakness and incurable infantilism could not help him to dismiss. He never knew what was the matter with him. He never spent a moment in reflection on his brand of Christianity, on his definition of the noble life, on his conception of "the Master's work." Surely he is one of the most ignorant of all men who have become famous; and the authors of the present biography have done well to lay that ignorance bare while they told the story of his rise to power.

The book is so rich in documents that it becomes among other things a piece of American social history. Newspapers and magazines have been searched for cartoons to illustrate and articles to interpret the evolution of public opinion regarding Comstock. He was of course enormously respected by those who also were clean—and these made up the majority. But I am interested to see how often he was understood. He was regularly ridiculed by *Life;* some one called him "an illiterate puppy"; and many knew him for the agent of indecency he essentially was. Mr. Broun and Miss Leech have managed, too, to sketch rather fully, and often most engagingly, certain contemporaries of Comstock who played principal parts in the drama. The episode of Victoria Woodhull, Tennessee Claflin, and George Francis Train—the work of Miss Leech, who on the whole is better at narrative than her collaborator—is nothing less than a masterpiece. In general the book is complete and penetrating; that it is painful is not the fault of Mr. Broun and Miss Leech.

MARK VAN DOREN

The Business of Books

The Truth About Publishing. By Stanley Unwin. By Houghton Mifflin Company. $2.

THERE are few people in the literary world—authors, publishers, booksellers, critics, and their brethren of the magazines and the journals—who should not be interested in Mr. Stanley Unwin's analysis of the business of publishing books. Let us take the authors first, for without them it is unnecessary to state there would be neither booksellers, critics, nor publishers. The immense business of issuing and selling books rests on the industry of this gay and charming group of people who are blankly ignorant, for the most part, of modern publishing practices.

An author who has spent two years in the gestation of his manuscript will abandon it into the hands of a publisher as a foundling is dropped on a doorstep, without knowing what care or brutality will be used toward it afterward. When he (or more often she) uses any apparent discrimination, it is often founded on the flimsiest reason; because he has met an agreeable fellow, a publisher's reader, at a literary tea; because he has recently seen a "best seller" extensively advertised by a certain house; or because he has admired an attractively spaced title page. Mr. Unwin's book should teach him what duties he might reasonably expect from his publisher, and on the other hand it might induce him to believe that the house which he has chosen is not a philanthropic institution or a den of Shylocks, and also that no group of men is endowed with miraculous powers in inducing the public to buy a book it does not want.

Any publisher may read Mr. Unwin's volume with profit, because he will find the chapters on the financial end of his business sound and it will stimulate his imagination, if he has any, in the discovery of new ways to sell his books. It will present to him in concrete form every detail of his business which time and success have made almost a reflex action in the processes of his work. The book certainly will not lessen the flood of young men and women who, having edited or written for college papers, turn every spring toward the publishing houses of New York, Boston, or Philadelphia in the hope of being

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allowed to read unsolicited manuscripts at twenty dollars a week, since Mr. Unwin proves over and over again the great fascination of a business which is founded on the distribution of ideas and of culture, on romance, and on what art may lie in the printed word.

Obviously, since this is an English work, there are many passages which do not refer to America or which need more elaboration than the American editor's footnotes permit. The art of advertising books is far more highly developed in this country, as anyone can see who compares the London *Times* Literary Supplement with the Book Review of the New York *Times*. There is likewise in England no parallel for the immense concern with the reviewing of books which is displayed by the newspapers and magazines of this country, what with the syndicated reviews of metropolitan critics, the publishers' canned "blurbs," and the thousand columns of space devoted to books every week. Nor does the book take into sufficient account for an American audience the smaller overhead and selling costs of the English publisher, which circumstance enables him to make a slight profit with books which the publisher on this side of the Atlantic could bring out only at a loss.

It is to be regretted that Mr. Unwin has not added a chapter on the public, which is, after all, the most direct concern of any publisher; the freakish, miserly, and often absurdly generous public that in this country will refuse its dollars for a book that half the critics from the Golden Gate to the East River have lauded as a masterpiece, while for no logical reason it rushes to buy a book that is in no critic's good repute. Its whims can be charted, nevertheless, and it is too bad that Mr. Unwin has not done so for the benefit of American merchants of book publicity. In England the circulating library has a far greater hold on the reading public than it has here, which necessarily limits the sale of new books; there is also little hope over there of reaching, with an extremely intelligent book, the broader public which enables the author to buy country houses and motor cars. Everyone knows that Mr. Wells and Mr. Bennett make most of their money in America; on the other hand, it is not conceivable that in England a "Story of Philosophy" could sell one hundred thousand copies, or that Mr. E. M. Forster's admirable "A Passage to India" could find half as many buyers there as it attained over here.

If an American publisher of the same ability as Mr. Unwin were to try the same experiment, he would agree with him, I am sure, in every important particular. But I doubt if he would leave the reader with the feeling that a publishing business can ever be as standardized as the processes of a factory devoted to biscuits or automobiles. There are more chances for more profit in this buoyant land, more reverses, more delightful surprises, more people pathetically anxious to acquire the knowledge and culture that may be packed in the pages of a book.

OLIVER HARRISON

The Last of the Puritans

The Rebellious Puritan: Portrait of Mr. Hawthorne. By Lloyd Morris. Harcourt, Brace and Company. $3.50.

HAVING had access to the voluminous unpublished portions of Hawthorne's journals and to a series of important letters known only in very small privately printed editions, Mr. Morris has made Hawthorne's own voluminous records of his life the chief materials for the present study. He has intruded himself as little as possible, he has skilfully worked his own comments into the stream of what seems to be Hawthorne's own confessions, and the result is something which gives the effect of an unusually intimate and revealing journal. "The Rebellious Puritan" is not only a fascinating and eminently readable book but probably the most illuminating study of Hawthorne the man which has yet been made.

Hawthorne was not, as the letters written to his future wife and here made public for the first time reveal, by any means incapable of passion. These letters, written to her during the course of a long engagement, glow with an intense desire, yet even that desire, the strongest of his life, was held sternly in check, and the general effect of Mr. Morris's book is to intensify the impression which Hawthorne has always given of a man whose impulses were frozen at their source. Whatever the cause of this paralysis of the will—and Mr. Morris hints that it was some phenomenon of morbid psychology—it set him definitely apart from his race. His ancestors had all played active and appropriate parts in the life of their time. One had come to New England with Winthrop in 1630, another had condemned a Quaker woman to be whipped through the streets, another had pronounced the judgment of death upon a witch, and still another had sailed the sea in a Yankee ship. But this gift for whole-hearted participation had died out in Nathaniel. Though literature and reform had in his time replaced witch-burning and seafaring as the characteristic activities of New England, he could not give himself enthusiastically to either. In the literary society of London and the studios of Rome he was perhaps understandably an outsider, but he was hardly more a part of Concord or Salem. He looked on at Brook Farm, looked on at Abolition, and looked on at the whole Transcendental movement. Frigidly, not aggressively, skeptical there was no world to which he felt that he "belonged," and though he was no longer a Puritan he was not quite anything else.

To the very end he remained moralist enough to fulminate with what was for him a wholly unwonted heat against the indecency of the nude art which he saw in Italy, and he never could bring himself to that trustful acceptance of merely sensuous beauty which is necessary to the formation of any spiritual world not essentially Puritan. For this incapacity the society of New England was no doubt itself partly to blame. The culture which sprang up there was completely without any expression in sensuous forms. It had no experience with any beauty but the beauty of the mind; it transcended the world, the flesh, and the devil without ever having had any traffic with any of them, even in its history, except under those merely ugly forms which a sternly repressed society permits. One and all, from mere eccentrics like Ripley through Margaret Fuller and even Emerson himself, there was something abstract and attenuated about the wisdom of the New England sages because they were so terribly intimate with God and the universe without knowing much of either man or the world. Emerson boasted that he was capable of all sins, but (as has been said before) he flattered himself. And the proof that all New England was like him is to be found in the fact that the doctrines which they heard preached had singularly little effect upon their conduct. Thoreau disseminated anarchy and Emerson preached that complete antinomianism which in other countries has been the occasion of the wildest license, but New England was no less orderly or virtuous than before. Inherent in the injunction to express one's nature is an invitation to all lusts, but though firebrands were scattered indiscriminately in every corner, New England proved singularly incombustible; its apostles of nihilism lived exactly like the Congregational ministers from whom they had sprung. Not a few were aghast at Margaret's rash marriage, and Nathaniel, sympathetic analyst of the dark places of the soul, was shocked by a naked woman in marble.

Of all the group only Melville—and Melville as well as the rest appears briefly but vividly in Mr. Morris's pages—was other than essentially innocent. He had been to the South Seas, he knew more than the rest about certain aspects of that nature concerning which they talked so glibly, and he alone seemed ever to feel in himself the explosive force of the ideas which were so innocently bandied about. In all New England Hawthorne's was the soul most nearly akin to his, but even Hawthorne shook his head, puzzled and distressed by the spectacle of so active a tumult. Sin was his own chosen subject, but he did not wish to come to as close a grip with

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it as Melville had done. It appealed to his fancy but not to his imagination; in his treatment of it there was always present an element of the fantastic, a suggestion of the arabesque, a playfulness which belongs to the danse macabre rather than to the mightier works of the imagination. His works represent, in a measure, an escape from reality into the world of fancy, and that is at once their charm and their limitation. Hawthorne was himself never near enough to sin to understand it completely.

When he had reached the last period of productive activity he asked, apropos of "The Marble Faun": "Is sin then . . . merely an element of human education, through which we struggle to a higher and purer state than we could otherwise have attained? Did Adam fall that we might ultimately rise to a far loftier paradise than his?" The very form of the question is still Puritan; another might have asked simply if any life to which no experience not innocent had ever made any contribution could be other than lacking in a certain richness and a certain resonance; but Hawthorne was getting close to the secret of his own sense of isolation and sterility. The Puritan discipline had provided him with a heavier armor against sin than he ever had occasion to need. Life did not even tempt him.

JOSEPH WOOD KRUTCH

Hungarian Rhapsody

Alpha. By Emery Balint. Translated from the Hungarian by Louis Rittenberg. Macy-Masius, Publishers. $2.

THERE is no more dangerous, and—if successful—profitable venture for a novelist than a foray into that hinterland of the mind of which our consciousness is merely the capital. Not an officially conducted tour with some psychological Baedeker in hand, nor a feverish gallop on the nightmare of fancy, but a relaxed stroll through the byways of a realm with which we are in daily contact. Apparently this is a difficult feat. We have plenty of convincing portraits and landscapes of consciousness; but when it comes to the unconscious there is either the most unrestrained romanticism or a set of clinical blue-prints which are as individualized as anatomical manikins. Of the former De Maupassant is a fair example. So inbred is this literary attitude in him that on the brink of insanity he produces a piece of romanticism like "The Horla." There are of course notable exceptions—artists like Dostoevsky and Hamsun (to whose "Hunger" Emery Balint's novel might pertinently be compared), who are at home in both worlds, and can steer their characters back and forth from the conscious to the unconscious without reducing them to phantoms or symbols. But reminder seems to be needed now that "the unconscious" is not a void to be filled in as one likes with the shards of shattered syntax.

In view of this fact, and apart from its other merits, "Alpha," the first of Emery Balint's trilogy (the succeeding volumes are Beta and Gamma), is a creditable achievement. Balint has succeeded in tracing the complex flux of thought under the cracked crust of consciousness, and coming out with sentences intact except for a liberal scattering of dots. He has kept in sight that insanity is not a disintegration of the mind but rather a reintegration in a looser, more complicated form than the conventionalized pattern called sanity. Steadily the porous exterior of Alpha, the young painter, is broken in by the contradictions of a civilization which his easy-going nature is too weak to force into arbitrary unity. Thereafter his raw uncovered soul drifts helplessly against the jagged realities of life which the conventions of sanity soften for most of us. Love, sex, art, religion, war are swallowed whole, and vomited forth again in one strange spew which is an unanalyzed but faithful specimen of the post-war nausea of Europe. But it is a work not without its beauty. Balint has caught the caprice of dreams, and the coordinated chaos of his book is largely woven together with their fluctuating, colored strands. Buoyed up by them for a while, the soul of Alpha flows back and forth between two inimical realities —the reality of his inner world and the reality of the world without—until he is crushed between the two. The final touch of the imaginary Christ, who comes down from the cross to save the paranoic Alpha from the pitchforks of the peasants whose barns he has fired, feels too much like a tacked-on "happy ending"; but it is to be forgiven in a work which is otherwise so uniformly convincing.

ALTER BRODY

Something New in Outlines

The New Universe. An Outline of the Worlds in Which We Live. By Baker Brownell. D. Van Nostrand Company. $4.

THE sub-title of this book is misleading. It is not just another "outline" like those sometimes brilliant, but almost always futile, stories of everything that assume an ignorant reader at the beginning and make him feel kicked and spit upon at the end. It is true that it has been built out of the material of a survey course for upper-classmen at Northwestern University, but it is, in spite of that, "a tune for the universe . . . a poem on things in general," and there is light and humor in its pages. It is something new both in literature and in college instruction.

A poem, regardless of its subject matter, ought to disclose two things at least, an idea and a person that loves and respects the idea. But when the subject is "the new universe" and the writer a university professor, disappointment would not be surprising. The idea will somehow have to be exorcised from the body or bodies of science, or possibly caught on the wing and delicately attached to it. The professor will have to be careful not to sit too complacently in his chair; he will have to be just a little mad. This book fulfils these criteria to a degree and the result is a not impossible Weltanschauung.

The idea is a happy one, taken from the oldest lore in the world and revived in surprisingly modern costumes. It is the idea of fire, the fire that moves in the vibrating atom, the fire that burns in the living organism, fire that flashes out in the values we call spiritual. These are Mr. Brownell's decent translations of the "electricity," "metabolism," and "consciousness" of college classroom discourse, and he uses them without succumbing with the emergent evolutionists to the temptation of seeing some scientific god in the burning bush. Fire always has expressed more adequately than most metaphors the poetic aspect of scientific objects, and Mr. Brownell has used it without self-conscious affectation. He may not even know that he has used it.

There are weak places in the book, especially when it deals with man's social life; the account then drops to the level of a series of newspaper editorials on current problems. It is interesting to note that the fire metaphor disappears in these places. One can hardly blame the writer for not being able to carry it through these shadowy realms, but a mediating term might be suggested. The anthropological theory of mores, social rituals, and customs with their invention and diffusion suggests the secret start and relentless devouring of forest and prairie fires. One does well to omit the torch of civilization, it seems.

But in spite of shortcomings of this sort, there is here the beginning of a literary job that will surely be continued, that is, the poetic assimilation of our raw scientific culture. It needs the philosophic detachment and sophistication expressed in the last chapters of this book to carry it through. This is another way of saying that Mr. Brownell is not a philosopher of the professorial chair, at any rate as he writes. He himself has some of the flare and whimsicality of his beloved fire. One would like to know him.

Some scientifically minded people will be shocked at this book and at any approval of it. Let them be warned that it is not a textbook on science, nor a popularization, in the ordinary sense, of laboratory rituals. Nevertheless it does no harm in ignoring the cause of culture and civilization and talking to the

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individual interestingly—sometimes beautifully, with humor rather than sentimentality—about things in general. It is not a great poem, but I think I can see some of Walt Whitman and a great deal of Carl Sandburg in it, and there are suggestions for some aspiring young Lucretius who wants to see in one clear vision this sorry scheme of things entire that we call the universe.

SCOTT BUCHANAN

A Good Book on Newspapers

Main Currents in the History of American Journalism. By Willard Grosvenor Bleyer. Houghton Mifflin Company. $4.

DR. BLEYER has written an excellent book, one of the very best on modern journalism. It stands out amid the never-ending flood of newspaper books by reason of its thoroughness, its worth-while and sound judgments. It does not pretend to be a history of American journalism, but it is a better, and in some respects more comprehensive, volume than others that claim to cover the whole field. Anyone who has read Dr. Bleyer's book will not only have the background which the author supplies by his chapter on early English journalism but a clear-cut picture of the rise of the metropolitan daily from its colonial beginnings to the great organization of today. The chapter on the rise of the political-party press from 1800-1833 is exceptionally comprehensive, while Dr. Bleyer's sketches of Godkin (and the story of *The Nation*), Greeley, the Bennetts, Raymond, Bowles, Dana, Nelson, Pulitzer, and Hearst are remarkably accurate and judicial. If the author rarely gives his own opinions, he cites critics and admirers alike of those of whom he treats.

As is plain from the above Dr. Bleyer confines himself chiefly to New York City journalists. One misses the story of Joseph Medill and Henry Watterson, for example, and one regrets that so discriminating an historian has not included a chapter on the Abolition press, or touched on the great part played by the weekly newspaper. Perhaps these will be forthcoming in a future volume.

OSWALD GARRISON VILLARD

Books in Brief

An Old Man's Folly. By Floyd Dell. George H. Doran Company. $2.

Nathaniel Windle was born in the fifties, married unromantically, and lived conventionally, and did not taste adventure until his declining years brought him in contact with radicals, peace societies, and protestors against the established social order. Mr. Dell admits to a "preoccupation with Mr. Windle's soul," and hastens over the early stages of his history in order to "get to his great adventure." Somehow one is led to suspect that the novelist knew this Mr. Windle in actual life, and has relied too greatly upon that fact. He is an unconvincing figure superimposed bodily upon a novel, by a process somewhat like that of the "transfer pictures" with which schoolboys decorate the backs of their hands. Most of the characters partake of the same unreality, and while one does not actively disbelieve in them, they are only remotely alive, like persons whose names are frequently in the newspapers.

A Man Could Stand Up. By Ford Madox Ford. Charles and Albert Boni. $2.50.

The third volume of what will eventually be a tetralogy. The account of the last few tense weeks of the war, as they react on the tory detachments of Tietjens, Mr. Ford's well-known hero, are inferior in power to similar war scenes in "No More Parades"; but in suggesting the almost horrifying psychology of relief which accompanied the eleventh of November, 1918, Mr. Ford is finely effective. The general importance of Mr. Ford's books (which have been much overrated by ex-

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citable reviewers) is that his dryly intellectual method of conveying the horror (and boredom) of warfare brings home that horror and that boredom to those highly intelligent people who remain unmoved before the agonizings of Latzko and the romantic shrillness of Barbusse. Perhaps this is merely equivalent to saying that Mr. Ford is a belated but valuable propagandist.

Kyra Kyralina. By Panait Istrati. With an Introduction by Romain Rolland. Translated from the French by James Whitall. Alfred A. Knopf. $2.50.

Panait Istrati is the son of a Greek smuggler and a Rumanian peasant woman. Five years ago he tried to kill himself. On his recovery he was urged by Romain Rolland to write stories. In 1917 he knew no French, but on excellent authority it is said that he writes good French. In this book he tells three adventures from the life of Stavro, rogue, vagabond, and poet. The background is the Balkans and Asia Minor. Certainly in these years it is a relief to read stories which involve no aspect of modern psychology and present no system of curing human motives. M. Istrati has not written another "Arabian Nights." He has color and life and rhythm and tragic drama, yet it is all too thin and sketchy.

Shadows Waiting. By Eleanor Carroll Chilton. The John Day Company. $2.50.

Dealing with the subtly fatal influence dead ancestors can exert on a pair of star-crossed lovers, "Shadows Waiting" is called by the author a melodrama of the intellect; and, whether or not the designation is accurate, it is undeniable that the story has hardly a trace of action. The tempo, in fact, has been retarded almost to the point of sluggishness. The tale develops in a half-lit world of mental fantasy, sown thickly with a thousand shadows, in which memories of the dead are meant to be as potent and actual as the figures of the living lovers. Many readers will find this novel quite beautiful; to others it may appear beautiful but dull.

Moving Pictures

"Metropolis"

HOLLYWOOD lives for money and sex. It borrows or buys its art. It is the Germans who are the perpetual adventurers in the cinema. They gave the camera its stripling mobility, its restless imagination. They played with lights in the studio and achieved innumerable subtleties in the use of black and white as a medium. Even in their scientific miniatures they have worked with a virtuoso camera. And it was the Germans who injected fantasy into the cinema.

"Metropolis" (Rialto Theater), for all its thesis and its subtitular dialectic compounded for American comprehension by the enlightened Channing Pollock, is much more akin to the romantic vagaries of "Siegfried" than to the realities of "The Last Laugh." For Fritz Lang, who directed both "Siegfried" and "Metropolis," is not a cinema radical. Like Murnau in "Faust" he thinks in terms of sheer visual beauty, composition, and group rhythms rather than of dynamics. He is still of the theater of Reinhardt in the fluency of his groups and the rhythmic progression of his pageant. Although Carl Freund, the camera man for "The Last Laugh" and "Variety," has worked here in the same capacity, "Metropolis" lacks cinematic subtlety. It is only in the "shots" of machinery in motion and in the surge of the revolutionists that it is dynamic. The camera is too often immobile, the technique that of the stylized theater.

Yet here for the first time the chill mechanized world of the future, which only barely revealed itself in "R. U. R.," has been given reality. Here is the city, that tormented circus of buildings which touch the sky, of tunnels that disrupt the places under the earth. Through the air man has hurled his

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obstructions, his bridges and traffic ways. Yet only the machines seem real; gigantic purring gods grinding down life. Machines, machines, machines, sliding through the earth, challenging the cosmos, pounding out human resistance as they set the awful tempo of life.

There is no loveliness here, except in the gardens of the rich, high above the levels of the city, where space and light are not mortified for efficiency. Below the surface of the earth the workers and their children crawl through a timed eternity, strapped to the dynamos like so many numbered robots. There is no rest, no beauty, no life below the gardens of the higher levels. Man is inanimate. Life is metronomic. It is only the machines that are alive. The machines and the careless children of "Brains."

As Lang has directed it, "Metropolis" is more stylized fantasy than realism. Even in the torrentous revolt of the workers as they pour through the machine-rooms, alive, demoniacal, there is an air of unreality. This is not revolution as the Russians stage it. It has neither taste nor smell. Yet it is magnificent. Even the most careless groupings are beautifully composed. Lang is too much the artist to deny the imagination.

"R. U. R." was a satire, but "Metropolis" is utterly devoid of humor. Thea von Harbou, its author, wrote it originally as a novel and then adapted it to the screen. Only her concept of Metropolis itself is intellectual. The rest is sentimental symbolism. There is no individualization within the type. Her persons are puppets. There is the Capitalist, his Son, Mary the spiritual leader of the workers, et al. The Son is the eternal mediator who, with the help of the woman Mary, although only after a revolution intervenes, brings "brains" and "brawn" together for the final fade-out.

Perhaps it is because of its original form that "Metropolis" lacks concision. One of the most interesting episodes of the entire film is that in which the inventor transmits the shape and likeness of Mary to the woman of his creation by encircling bands of electricity, yet it is only partially developed. The robotess, or creature of human invention, breeds revolution and is stoned by the mob, but the formula which gave her life is never mentioned again. The inventor is himself hurled from the cathedral roof by the blond and shining John, the hero; but what of the formula?

It is Metropolis itself, the city of domed basements and curving machine-rooms, of massed buildings that conceal the sky, of aeroplanes that ply their corner-to-corner traffic, of trains that seem to shoot into unmeasured and untracked space, that makes Fritz Lang's film so significant.

EVELYN GERSTEIN

Drama

Harlequinade

IT is, I think, a sound principle of aesthetics that though old forms are never successfully revived they are often rediscovered. The spirit of even the aesthetic antiquarian is fatally remote from the spirit of the artist, and he never succeeds in doing more than galvanizing into a ghastly semblance of life the dead body of an art form. With the genuine artist, however, it is different. In search of the new he not infrequently reevolves the old, and though he is often scornfully indifferent to traditions he unwillingly illustrates their valid persistence.

These somewhat solemn reflections are suggested by Mr. John Howard Lawson's modernistic farce "Loud Speaker" (Fifty-second Street Theater), and suggested not at all because it is a solemn work but because he has reached by a devious route leading through Berlin and Moscow the nearest approximation yet seen in New York of the spirit of the Commedia dell' Arte. Hundreds of solemn pages have been written about the gaiety of the Harlequinade and not a few solemn attempts have been made to revive it. We have been enjoined to laugh recklessly at the reckless pranks of Renaissance buffoons and we have been asked to admire the dramatic virtues of the fixed comic type who disports himself in an improvised play; yet no performances have been more "literary" in the worst sense of the word and none further removed from any genuine spontaneity. Now comes Mr. Lawson, whose name has been associated with the most revolutionary type of drama and who undoubtedly thinks of himself far more as an interpreter of the "machine age" than as in any way connected with the aspirations of the more gently aesthetic prophets of the theater, but who nevertheless conceives a completely modern and yet completely genuine Commedia dell' Arte. He constructs upon the stage a maze of elevated platforms and a dizzy series of stairways, he plants a jazz band upon one airy platform, and he sets a number of fantastic caricatures of modern types—the politician, the flapper, the tabloid reporter, etc.—to chasing one another upstairs and down through the course of an all but plotless fantasia. What could be more desperately modern and what could be at the same time nearer to the spirit of the Commedia dell' Arte, not as that spirit is seen by wistful aesthetes through the mists of time but as it was seen by those to whom it was merely popular entertainment?

Mr. Lawson's characters are not in the ordinary sense of the word characters at all. To anyone not familiar with modern life and modern satire his politician, for example, would be as meaningless as Punch. Neither is his plot in an ordinary sense a plot. When, for example, his flapper takes a few jazz steps with one of the men-servants and when the politician goes into conference with two papier-maché dummies, neither action has any meaning except in connection with a definite stage tradition. Yet exactly the same thing was true in the case of the Commedia dell' Arte. A long tradition of satire had established certain comic types, the general nature of their exploits was fixed in the spectator's mind, and the problem of the performer was to put the character through amusing variations upon his regular routine. "Loud Speaker" is probably the first play to take advantage of the fact that certain characters like the flapper and the politician have reached the point where they may be successfully stylicized and used as puppets.

No hocus-pocus surrounds the play. It was not, I take it, intended to be profound or particularly significant of any esoteric thing. It is, however, intended to be amusing, and amusing it will be to any person who has the simplicity of mind to enjoy it simply. It is no more intellectual than a vaudeville act, and yet a considerable number of the same people who are highly entertained by the antics of the tramp comedian in a burlesque show who is invited to the duchess's house party will object to the comedy of "Loud Speaker" because the action is so fantastic and so improbable.

Zoe Akins's "Thou Desperate Pilot" (Morosco Theater) contains one shrewdly drawn character—that of the hard-headed little adventuress—but the play as a whole is absurdly high-hat. The scene is "a casino in France," the people all either frightfully rich or frightfully aristocratic, and everybody comports himself as if he were trying to live up to a movie-director's ideal of the *haut-monde*. "Crime" (Eltinge Theater) is a crook play with some unusually ingenious thrills.

JOSEPH WOOD KRUTCH

What Made These Women "Modern"?

The eleventh article in the series of personal revelations by well-known women will appear next week. John B. Watson, behaviorist, and Beatrice M. Hinkle, psychoanalyst, will analyze these articles for The Nation, *in an attempt to discover the underlying causes of the modern woman's attitude toward men, marriage, children, and jobs.*

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International Relations Section

A Soviet Rebuke to England

THE Soviet note to Great Britain in reply to the British note of February 23 threatening to break off relations with the Soviet Union was handed to the British Chargé d'Affaires in Moscow on February 26. While the British note was printed in full in many American papers, only garbled summaries of the Russian reply were cabled. We reprint it from the London *Times* of February 28.

SIR: The Soviet Chargé d'Affaires ad interim in Great Britain has transmitted to me telegraphically the note signed by Sir Austen Chamberlain, the Foreign Secretary, which was handed to him on the 23rd instant and published on the same day in the British press.

The note begins by stating the quite unquestionable fact of the existing unsatisfactory relations between Soviet Russia and Great Britain. The unsatisfactory character of these relations Sir Austen Chamberlain attempts to explain in his note, as he so often did in public speeches in Parliament and outside, by alleged infringements on the part of the Soviet Government of obligations undertaken regarding Great Britain in the domain of propaganda. The note cites textually the agreement signed by the Soviet Government on June 4, 1923, to the effect that the Soviet Government undertakes not to support with funds or in any other form persons or bodies or agencies or institutions whose aim is to spread discontent or foment rebellion in any part of the British Empire, and to impress upon its officers and officials the full and continuous observance of these conditions.

During the three and a half years which have elapsed since the signing of the said agreement the British Government has repeatedly addressed to the Soviet Government directly and through public statements reproaches of alleged infringements of the said agreement. Rejecting these charges, the Soviet Government has always demanded that they should be based on some definite instances. In violation of the obligation undertaken in the same year, 1923, on behalf of the British Government by Lord Curzon, the then Foreign Secretary, immediately to bring to the cognizance of the Soviet Government supposed instances of infringement of obligations, not allowing such cases to accumulate without making charges (Lord Curzon's telegram of May 29, No. 127), the British Government has heretofore preferred to make general wholesale reproaches to the Soviet Government, never giving details, except in one case, when, during the general election in Great Britain in 1924, there was made an unsuccessful attempt to corroborate an accusation by reference to the well-known and so-called "Zinoviev letter" of the then president of the Executive Committee of the Communist International.

The Soviet Government, though immediately declaring that it could not assume responsibility for the actions of an international organization which was directed and controlled by delegates of the Communist parties of various countries, in view of the special political role which the latter might play, agreed to submit it to any expert examination and accept the decision of any arbiter. The fact that the British Government declined the proposal of the Soviet Government could not be understood otherwise than as the withdrawal of the accusation, and since then the forgery of the letter has evoked no more doubts from anyone, including Labor circles, holding power in England when the accusation was proffered.

Thus, the only definite charge was based on a faked document, the so-called "Zinoviev letter." At the same time none of the persons who misinformed the British Government was punished, although that forged letter at one time created a threat to peace and strained to the utmost the relations of the two states and left its mark on the whole subsequent development of Anglo-Soviet relations.

With reference to the agreement of June 4, 1923, Sir Austen Chamberlain, in the entire text of the note, does not adduce a single instance of the infringement by the Soviet Government of this agreement—namely, there was not a single instance of "spreading discontent or fomenting rebellion in any part of the British Empire."

The British Government's note only enumerates a series of public utterances by Soviet leaders in Russia and newspaper articles in the Soviet press. I must, therefore, mention the fact that between the Soviet Government and Great Britain there exist no agreements limiting the freedom of speech or of the press within the frontiers of the two countries. Just as the British Government did not undertake the obligation on behalf of its citizens to praise or not to criticize the social and political order of the Soviet state, so the Soviet Government undertook no obligation on behalf of its citizens that they should praise or not criticize the social and political order of Great Britain and the capitalist countries generally.

The Trade Agreement of 1921, of the infringement of which the Soviet Government has also been repeatedly and without foundation accused, a clause dealing with propaganda binds the two parties only to "refrain from hostile actions or undertakings against the other party, and from conducting outside its own borders any official propaganda, direct or indirect, against the institutions of the British Empire or the Russian Soviet Republic."

To bring published or verbal utterances made within Soviet Russia within the scope of the agreement of 1923 or the agreement of 1921 is an arbitrary extension of the limits of these agreements.

I could produce numerous examples of the wide use and, unfortunately, most immoderate abuse of the right to engage in propaganda within Great Britain against the Soviet Government by members of the British Government. I will strictly limit myself to but a few examples. In his speech at Watford on June 20 Lord Birkenhead, Secretary of State for India, referred to the Soviet Government as "a gang of assassins and robbers" (the *Morning Post*, June 22, 1925). At a Conservative meeting at Tunbridge Wells, Mr. Churchill, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, attacking the British Socialists, declared: "Behind all this sinister and unwholesome movement stood the dark power of Moscow. There we had what we had never before, a band of cosmopolitan conspirators gathered from the underworld of the great cities of Europe and America in despotic possession of the still great resources of what was once a mighty and famous empire, Russia" (the *Morning Post*, November 30, 1925). At Bolton Mr. Churchill spoke of the Soviet Government as "dark conspirators in the Kremlin in Moscow" (the *Daily Telegraph*, June 22, 1926).

Similar attacks can be found in the utterances of Mr. Amery, the Colonial Secretary; Sir Samuel Hoare, Secretary for Air; Sir Laming Worthington-Evans, Secretary for War, and others, not to mention their supporters in the Conservative Party, such as Mr. A. T. Cook, who at the Conservative Conference at Scarborough on October 7, 1926, called the Soviet Government "a group of international murderers" (the *Morning Post*, October 8, 1926), Commander Locker-Lampson, Sir William Davison, and others.

Still sharper attacks against the Soviet Union abound in the press of the ruling Conservative Party every day, abusing Soviet institutions, the Soviet Government and its representatives in London, and spreading incredible and fantastic lies about the Soviet Union.

It must at the same time be observed that the British representatives in Moscow are enjoying the same diplomatic privileges as the representatives of other countries, and have never been subjected to insults or abuse on the part of the Soviet press, as were the representatives of the Soviet Government in London on the part of the British Conservative press. It is impossible

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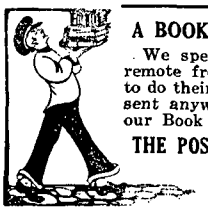

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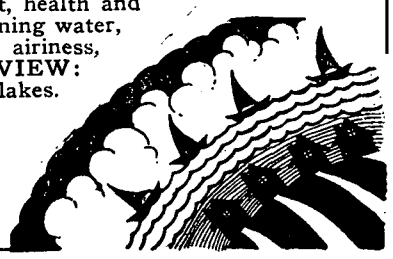

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to find either in the Soviet press generally or in the articles and speeches to which the British Government refers in its note any sharp attacks against Great Britain similar to those mentioned above. It is impossible to regard as anti-British propaganda such things as an analysis or estimate of the foreign policy of the British Government and its attitude toward the Soviet Union, or arguments by the principal party leaders about the inevitability of world revolution and the importance of the national revolutionary movement in the East, still less the ideas expressed by the People's Commissary of Public Health concerning the significance of physical culture from the viewpoint of the revolutionary labor movement or the appointment of Kamenev as Ambassador to Italy, which has nothing to do with Anglo-Soviet relations and was agreed to by the Italian Government. Within the limits of his party activity Kamenev has voiced his opinions concerning the tasks of his party.

Regarding the *Izvestia*, which is considered as the official organ of the Central Executive Committee, since in it all the decrees and decisions of the Government must be published, it may be said that this paper has one of the largest circulations and caters for hundreds of thousands of readers, who must be given all the information interesting to them, including manifestos and resolutions of the Soviet, as well as of party institutions. The office publishing this paper can no more accept responsibility for the contents of such kind of manifestos and resolutions than it can for reports which it prints of utterances and statements made against the Soviet Government, including the above-quoted speeches by British Ministers. Here again it must be repeated that the publishing within the Soviet Union of any reports of any verbal statement does not infringe any obligation undertaken by the Soviet Government whatsoever.

Particular dissatisfaction has apparently been caused the British Government by the opinions expressed by Soviet leaders concerning the anti-Soviet course of British policy in third countries. But with no less justification and foundation could be characterized as delusions the constant references made by the politicians and members of the British Government to the alleged omnipresence and omnipotence of so-called "Soviet agents," who are represented as being responsible for all or any difficulties in the British Empire in all parts of the world.

The Soviet Government deplores the unsatisfactory condition of the relations between Russia and Great Britain indicated in the British Government's note. It believes, however, that to explain these regrettable circumstances by mutual accusations and an unfriendly tone in the press of the two countries would be to take cause for effect and vice versa

The Soviet Government would likewise consider it incorrect and undignified to seek an explanation of these conditions in physiological or psychological characteristics of these or other British statesmen. It is inclined to believe that the abnormality of these relations consists not only in the fact that the representations made by the two countries do not correspond with the interests of the development of relations between Great Britain and the Soviet Government.

What also matters is that in its relations with the Soviet Union the British Government consciously infringes the usual international customs and even elementary decency. It periodically thrusts in the face of the Soviet Government indefinite and unfounded accusations, refusing even to discuss them; it avoids settling mutual claims and complaints either diplomatically or through special conferences, committees, or delegations; declining the usual diplomatic ways of settling conflicts, it permits itself to talk to the Soviet Government in the tone of threats and ultimatums; and lastly, it ignores the constitution of the Union of Soviet Republics, making insistent attempts in its notes to substitute party or even international institutions for the formal Government of the Union.

The same abnormality of relations is also expressed by the fact that the British Government in its note permitted itself an unheard-of and unprecedented tone toward M. Chicherin, the Soviet People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs. The position which the British Government has established with regard to the Soviet state encourages the hostile campaign which finds expression and the coarsely abusive statements in the British Parliament on the part of members of Parliament and even members of the Government and in the British press.

It must be added that the constant attempts by the British Government to minimize and even annul the importance of the fact of the restoration of diplomatic relations, together with the authoritative information possessed by the Soviet Government regarding the continued attempts by individual members of the British Government to come to an understanding with ex-Czarist diplomats and counter-revolutionary representatives working in favor of another insurrection will not allow public opinion in the Soviet Union to forget the role played by Great Britain in the first insurrection.

At the conclusion of his note, Sir Austen Chamberlain deemed it timely and fit to advance the threat of a complete rupture in commercial and diplomatic relations in the event of the Soviet Government not complying with the new demands which do not arise from the existing Anglo-Soviet agreements and the mutual formal obligations. In declaring that threats against the Soviet Government will have no intimidating effect upon anyone in the Soviet Union, the Soviet Government takes the liberty to express its firm conviction that the conclusion of the Trade Agreement in 1921 and the subsequent restoration of diplomatic relations corresponded to interests and necessities of the peoples of the Soviet Union as well as those of the British Empire. If the present British Government believes that the rupture of Anglo-Soviet trade and all other relations is called for by the needs of the British people and will serve the British Empire and cause general peace, then, of course, it will act in a suitable manner, assuming full responsibility for the consequences.

On its part, the Soviet Government confirms that the statements of the late M. Krassin, quoted in the note of the British Government, concerning the desirability of removing all difficulties existing between the two countries and everything giving ground for mutual complaint and of establishing quite normal relations actually correspond to the immutable and sincere wishes of the Soviet Government. In accordance with the decision for peace of the toiling masses of the Soviet Union, which are in entire conformity with the same aspirations of the popular masses of Great Britain, the Soviet Government will in future also pursue its peace-loving policy, which excludes all aggressiveness toward other countries. It will welcome the British Government sincerely if it will go to meet it on this path.

[Signed] LITVINOV,
Assistant Commissar for Foreign Affairs

Contributors to This Issue

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